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MOVIES



NO. 10!

# CULT MOVIES

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# CULT MOVIES

## Issue 10

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This issue dedicated to Frank J. Dello Stritto,  
a great Lugosi historian.

### Special Thanks To:

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# DEEP INSIDE CULT MOVIES

By Michael Copner

Convention Culture is sweeping the nation! More and more in recent years, very worthwhile fan related conventions have been held for collectors of comics, glamour memorabilia, toys & model kits, posters & movie collectibles, and so forth. Imagine going – even for two days – to a giant shopping mall filled with all your favorite things in life, as well as populated by guest celebrities galore all relating to exactly that same passion. That's what conventions are all about.

Throughout 1993, *Cult Movies* magazine was present at some wonderful conventions and film festivals in our Southern California area, where we were delighted to get out and meet our many friends. Issue #8 of *Cult Movies* was previewed at the San Diego Comic Con. We've also been guests of the American Cinemateque, Glamourcon, and some of the events at the Beverly Garland Hotel where media shows seem to be happening more and more frequently.



Kevin & Susan Clement join Zacherle at Chiller Theater Convention.

But now, we're proud to announce our participation in one of the best established East Coast shows; the fantastic *Chiller Theatre Convention!!!* We'll be there for the big May 21 & 22 Convention in New Jersey – an event that will go down in history as the preeminent event of the year. For *Cult Movies* publisher Buddy Barnett and editor Michael Copner will be joining the guests at the massive Something Weird Video table. And here the guest of honor will be none other than the one and only Coffin Joe – the mystery man from Brazil. Thousands of horror fans who've seen the videos of Coffin Joe's earlier films have wanted to meet him, and *Cult Movies* is delighted to join with *Chiller Theatre* and Something Weird to bring him to America for the first time ever! Also at our table will be guests Jim Steranko, Frank Henenlotter, Conrad Brooks, Harry Novak, and many other Cult Movie favorites. We're looking forward to meeting you at the *Chiller Theatre Con* in May, and have printed the related details about it on the back cover of this issue. See you at *Chiller!!!*

...

The new interest in John Andrews is the most curious turn of events in Hollywood. In his last days alive the guy wasn't worth a second glance. Dead two years now he is absolutely fascinating. Memories and testimonials about Andrews continue to arrive at our offices, occasionally including declarations that he is actually still alive. The Ed Wood's Ed Wood, the late Mr. Andrews continues to grow more legendary with each passing day.

Now that he is (almost certainly) no longer



*Cult Movies* Editor Michael Copner at a recent film festival with two lovely cult fans.

amongst the living, I do regret not talking more with him, and not granting his request to have new publicity pictures taken of him. But frankly, I must confess that I stayed as far away from him as possible – crossed the street to avoid him when he would be seen advancing. Near the end he was homeless about 2 weeks out of each month, and turned up often on Sunset or Hollywood Blvd. When he had a few bucks he would live at the Mark Twain Hotel on Wilcox Street, just across from the Hollywood Post Office. Whatever his housing situation, he was often drunk and likewise disorderly. At times the man gave off the most intriguing accumulation of odors imaginable. A rare blend of stale liquor, urine, unwashed sox, and noxious fragrances identifiable and unidentifiable. Altogether an odor calculated to offend.

On the occasions when we did speak, his hostile temper was as foul as the fumes that followed him night and day.

On one rare occasion we did meet and converse. I was in Hollywood, running a course of bank, post office, print shop and other routine stops. Andrews came upon me by surprise, trapped me at a spotlight on Sunset Blvd., right in front of the Cinerama Theatre. He'd cleaned up quite a bit, really didn't even look like the street person he was, and was as calm as I'd seen him in months. The new movie about *The Doors* had just opened at the Cinerama, and Andrews wanted to talk about that. He knew a pretty fair amount about Jim Morrison, and was still speculating about him. Neither of us had seen the film yet, but John Andrews was planning to see it that day.

Suddenly he asked everyone's favorite question, "Do you think Morrison is still alive?"

He was asking in a somber, sober way, and I gave him the sincerity he deserved. "I don't really know, but I've heard he's alive."

Andrews lowered his voice, poked himself in the chest with an extended finger, and whispered in a conspiratorial hush, "I happen to know he's alive!"

And that was it. My close encounter with John Andrews was at an end, for he suddenly picked up his bag and hurried off up the street toward Hollywood Blvd.

That was my last experience with John Andrews. A short time later I heard the news that he'd been killed – in two vastly contradicting versions of an event I've never been entirely able to resolve. And

that's just as it should be; I'm sure Andrews would approve of these mysteries about his death if he was alive today.

And of course, there are those who do insist that he is alive today. Will John Andrews sightings soon outnumber Elvis sightings? Has he fled to Paris for the chance to make serious films with Jim Morrison, Criswell and other mystics who continue to defy the laws of logic? Who can tell what the future will bring?

In the meantime, while we wait patiently for the future to get here, we're proud to run a fascinating tribute to John Andrews in this issue, another piece to the puzzle, another addition to the legend – colorful memories set down in black and white by filmmaker and former Andrews employer, Mr. Ray Dennis Steckler. Thanks to Ray for the most enlightening and disturbing John Andrews tale yet!

...

"*Crawling From The Wreckage*" Dept. As everyone knows and is tired of hearing, we had an earthquake in Los Angeles. Yep, another one...and this is our excuse this time for being a bit late with the magazine, and a bit more disorganized. Actually, our offices are spread out in three different buildings. Two of them were virtually unharmed, although there was a whole lot of shaking going on! It looked as though the third building might be condemned and closed up – with many of our articles, photos, and pressbooks locked inside – but fortunately that particular terror did not come to pass. We note that the earthquake here, together with the ice and snow on the East Coast, made it extremely difficult to send materials through mail. Several items seem to be forever lost. Second Day Air packages from here to New York took three weeks to transport.

There were a few casualties – and a few strange reactions amidst the quaking, and the dozens of aftershocks that rocked the boat more than a little. For example;

Our new writer Lisa Petrucci had just moved to California from the East Coast; she'd never been in an earthquake before. It was a terrifying experience. Coming in the pre-dawn hours, casting everyone into darkness, she claimed it was the worst nightmare she'd ever had.

On the other hand, *Scream Queen* Linnea Quigley claims she merely rolled over and went back to sleep!

Mike Vraney of Something Weird Video was in



town from Seattle. He thought the earthquake was lots of fun; he really enjoyed it.

Harry Novak of Boxoffice International was out of town when the quake hit, but when he returned a week after, upon entering the offices and warehouses that comprise the homebase of Boxoffice International, he found every film, video, poster, photo, as well as most of the office equipment, dumped off the shelves and desks and sprawled in mountains upon the floor. Harry was weeks in restoring order to the operations.

Perhaps the worst personal tragedy came to our cover artist Dave Stevens. As you may know from the news the San Fernando Valley was hit much harder by the quake than the areas over the hills and down into Hollywood and Los Angeles proper. Dave was living in an area particularly hard hit, and a portion of his house came crashing down in the first moments of the earthquake. Dave has spent the past month moving into a new home, and therefore the advertised front cover by Dave Stevens was out of the question. (We plan to have him back up front next issue!) We've turned over the front cover to the talented Jimmy Zero, who previously created our Godzilla cover for issue 7.

...

Harry Novak has his hands full — of tickets and money. He also has a beautiful smile, but not as lovely as Mellisa, the house manager of Cinemaland, a Los Angeles theatre showing a new and different Harry Novak film each and every week!!! Cinemaland may be the best kept secret in town; very few people seem to know of this place, but if they knew I believe the place would be selling out each performance. The current policy calls for a new triple bill each week, comprised of one erotic Japanese film, one erotic Chinese film, and one erotic American film. For the past 6 months or so, the American films have been the famed releases of Novak's Boxoffice International Pictures, which cranked out some of the damndest exploitation product in the 1970s. Such goodies as *Pigkeeper's Daughter*, *Country Hookers*, and *Sassy Sue*. They're back on the big screen at Cinemaland.

Theatre owner Michael Lee promises to continue this great blend of Asian and American erotica, so "When in Southern California," be sure to stop by Cinemaland. And tell 'em *Cult Movies* sent you.



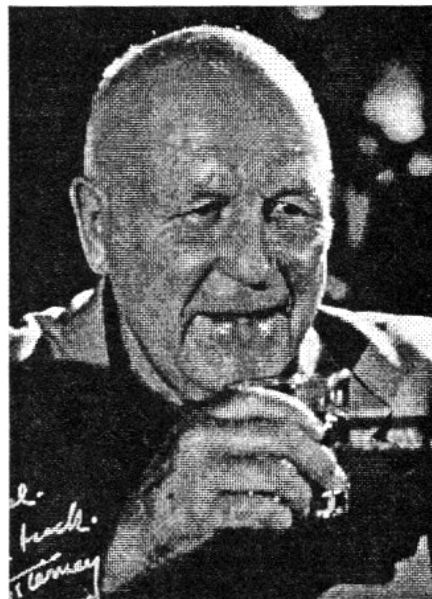
Harry Novak and Mellisa.

...

And we're delighted to announce a new series of film programs sponsored by *Cult Movies* magazine, Eric Caidin of Hollywood Book and Poster, and the notorious Johnny Legend. The shows are presented at Hollywood Moguls, a new hot spot in town designed with your pleasures in mind. Moguls has the best food in town. They have the best

prices in town. They have the weirdest interior decorator in town. Okay, it's eclectic. But we've put on five shows thus far, and are building a loyal following of fans of unusual cinema. On St. Patrick's Day, we held a screening of *Dillinger* starring Lawrence Tierney. The highlight of the evening was a personal appearance by Mr. Tierney himself, who charmed and delighted our audience with anecdotes galore about his years of movie making.

Every Thursday night is Cult Movie Night at the Hollywood Moguls. You're welcome to come down, enjoy some delicious food, and share an evening of unusual screen entertainment and (often) the appearance of famed screen personalities.



Lawrence Tierney

In the near future we'll present the following shows: Drug Film Retrospective (April 14); Bela Lugosi Tribute (April 21); William Castle Festival (April 29).

Hollywood Moguls is located at 1650 North Hudson, at the corner of Hollywood Blvd. Our shows begin at 7:30 pm, and run — well, sometimes until two in the morning!

...

This issue we welcome John Marshall with his look at Japanese superhero television. Mr. Marshall is also the creator of the new Mortarman comicbook series, reviewed in this issue. John will be with us again with more articles on Japanese television.

The legendary Johnny Legend joins us with his new column, "Cult Around The Clock," which seems to be comprised of nothing but news about Johnny Legend. Oh well, at least some of it's true...

More than any other filmmaker in America today, it would be easy to imagine Fred Olen Ray working happily at Universal in the 1940s. His love for the genre films and the actors of the period is evident in his current work. Fred's always given work to the actors from that time period, and styled his films after the fashion of the great old horror classics — as much as the time and budgetary restraints of his films will allow. His new film *Dinosaur Island*, is filled with knowing tributes to many nostalgic idols, from Godzilla to Jackie Gleason! In this issue Fred is interviewed about his latest (and greatest?) film. Next issue Fred Olen Ray will be with us again, via his account of his association with Ed Wood.

Author Bryan Senn contributes a tribute to Lugosi's *Human Monster* that is sure to bring back fond memories of that film. Bryan is the author of a new book on genre films, to be reviewed next issue.

And speaking of Lugosi, it's obvious from the fan mail that the most popular new writer in our pages is Mr. Frank Dello Stritto, with his series of spectacular articles on the Lugosi Legend. This issue's piece on Beatrice Weeks answers questions which fans have been asking for over 30 years. Coming soon will be Mr. Dello Stritto's exhaustive piece on the stage career of Bela Lugosi — virtually a book in itself, which we will try to squeeze into a single issue of *Cult Movies*.

But enough of the selected short subjects and the previews of coming attractions. It's time to turn you over to the first of many exciting features in this issue. We trust you'll have the time of your life with our current program. To begin the show, simply look to the next page.

Happy reading,  
Michael Copner  
Editor



Wanted! More readers like Jade East!



# LETTERS

*Cult Movies* #9 was my introduction to your outstanding periodical, and I loved it. As a baby boomer weaned on *Famous Monsters* and a plethora of late night horror flicks, I found *Cult Movies* very compatible to my esoteric and nostalgic interests. As stated in your editorial, you are much more than a monster magazine, although I certainly don't consider "monster mag" a derogatory label by any means. Your coverage seems eclectic and encompasses a wide variety of bizarre and delightfully "weird" cinematic material.

Frank J. Dello Stritto's eloquent essay on the "Summer of '31" was a discerning piece. The perennial grievance of Lugosi and Lugosi enthusiasts was that the Dracula role irreversibly typecast him in the horror genre. Paradoxically, Lugosi was permanently chagrined by not attaining the original Frankenstein monster role! Playing the monster would scarcely have given Lugosi the artistic freedom he so desperately craved and deserved. As Mr. Dello Stritto states, "he would have been fighting even a stronger typecasting with horror." Lugosi desired to play comedic and romantic leads, and his thick accent proved a formidable hindrance to his aspirations. Whether he declined the monster role or was denied it will never be definitively answered.

I love Lugosi, but I am grateful that he never appeared in the original *Frankenstein*. We would have been denied the thespian skills of the great Boris Karloff. Without the seminal *Frankenstein* role Mr. Karloff's chances for stardom would have been dubious. We have two wonderful horror icons, Lugosi and Karloff, to admire and enjoy ad infinitum.

I have read a lot of literature about the early Universal horror films, but have never seen the James Whale letter to Colin Clive published anywhere before. I found it an informative and fascinating adjunct to a fine article.

I am happy to be a *Cult Movies* subscriber  
Timothy M. Walters  
Muskogee, OK

Dear *Cult Movies*,

I just got the Karloff audio tape interview offered for sale in your back pages, and found it to be great. I'm especially fascinated by individuals whose continued success has made them mellow and more honest than less established celebrities. Boris comes across as someone who has no reason to knock actors he's not crazy about, since he doesn't need to rely on hot gossip to get people to listen to him. Another thing I liked is the guy's genuine modesty. When Karloff glances over a lot of his early work, you get the impression that it really wasn't a big deal back then, and nobody really was very impressed with him at the time! Plus, his attitude toward typecasting is beautiful! He realized early on that he was in business. He knew that he was fortunate to have a trademark, which is something it takes people like Adam West twenty years to figure out.

Sincerely,  
John Marshall

Dear *Cult Movies*,

We are a friends group devoted to the cult of *Maid To Order*, a 1987 film directed by Amy Jones, with Ally Sheedy and Beverly D'Angelo. For us, it is one of the greatest and most enjoyable films ever



Merry Clayton (from left), Ally Sheedy and Begonia Plaza in *Maid To Order*.

made. We'd like to read coverage about it in your magazine.

Also, we would like to receive letters, and to exchange press-cuts and stuff, from other *Maid To Order* fans. People in Spain think *Cult Movies* is a gem magazine for fans of unusual cinema. Every issue is available here in a sci-fi shop in Barcelona. Keep up your good work, and remember that movie classic *Maid To Order*.

Best wishes,  
Josep Jordi  
P O Box no. 48  
08220 Terrassa  
Spain

Dear Friends,

Greatly enjoyed the Lee Harris piece on K. Anger. I had the pleasure of meeting Anger on a Hollywood street while working on a documentary about Angelyne, the billboard queen. He spotted my Bolex camera and came up just as I was filming the installation of one of her billboards (Selma and Vine). One thing led to another and he agreed to interview her (he had previously wanted to film her as Jayne Mansfield—she refused) for the film at his Hollywood apt. The interview went well, unfortunately the producer took off with the footage, without leaving word of his whereabouts or plans. I remember the Rudy Vallee dog given to K by Vallee's widow and the Valentino cigar box. I'm glad to hear he's working on a book again; he has a rare genius.

Great magazine you've got.  
Best Wishes,  
Michael Guccione  
Pasadena, CA

Hey Folks,

Once again *Cult Movies* proved to be interesting reading, with a fine selection of articles and interviews. In a time when the term B Movies is frowned upon in certain circles, your magazine is refreshing in every way.

For my two drachmas Vincent Price was a consummate actor, handling comedy, drama, and horror roles with equal skill. Mr. Price, like all those we hold dear, will never really be gone; Vincent will live on forever in our hearts, and on movies screens large and small.

Take Care,  
Conrad Widener

Dear *Cult Movies*,

It's nice to find a publication that carries steady coverage on a subject that deserves it—Japanese monster movies! Since the demise of *Japanese Fantasy Film Journal*, there's been a real void to fill for fans of this genre, so more power to you. Your Godzilla and Gamera film checklists were fun to read, although I would like to see more in-depth looks at individual movies, rather than just general overviews.

A few requests, corrections, and observations: One conspicuous absence from your article on "Toho's Other Giant Monsters" back in issue #5 was a film called *Latitude Zero* (1969), a wonderfully loony, action-packed adventure which stars Joseph Cotton and Caesar Romero. While not quite in the same mold as the giant "Kaiju" pictures like *War Of The Gargantuas*, it does feature a handful of outlandish creatures, such as man-sized rats, a humanoid bat-monster, and a griffin-like winged lion. The film also presents a super submarine which seems to have been inspired by *Atragon*.

Also, it would be great to see some coverage of the excellent *Majin* series from Daiei Studios. Particularly the elusive third film, *Majin Strikes Again* (1966), which, I believe, was never officially shown in America.

Finally, fans of the Toho films should note that Woody Allen's famous *What's Up Tiger Lily?* is in fact a dubbed version of a 1964 Toho spy drama called *Key Of Keys*. And while the movie has no giant monsters, it does feature a virtual who's who of Toho cast regulars, including the three most prominent starlets of the kaiju genre: Mie Hama, Akiko Wakabayashi, and Kumi Mizuno. And best of all, all three ladies get to be really sexy in it.

Keep the monsters coming.

Sincerely,  
Shawn Sheridan,  
Culver City, CA

Dear *Cult Movies*,

Tower Records carries your magazine here, and that's where I discovered issue 9, and learned of the deaths of both Peter Coe and Valda Hansen.

There is something compelling about the story of Ed Wood and his gang of misfits. I have never gone in for celebrity biographies or scandal sheets, have shied away from that *Hollywood Babylon* variety of sniggering morbidity, and yet I eagerly read Rudolph Grey's bio on Wood (depressing as it was) and will always have a soft spot for the lamentable Woodian oeuvre. My interest has nothing to do with the prevalent so-bad-it's-good trend; there is a true poignancy about these people, close as they were to the Hollywood dream that they could touch, yet never grasp.

We learn more about humanity through its failure than its success. By viewing the films of Ed Wood, one can know essentially what he was all about. We see his concerns, his passions, his view of the world. That the particulars are, to conventional sensibilities, ludicrous or even depraved, is



just the code one has to break when examining another's life.

And regarding the fuss over Coffin Joe/Ze do Caixao in *Monster, International*—that's the bane of this genre: those who, apparently having no real problems with which to contend, turn trivia into a battleground. Ah, but that's show biz, and the very stuff that dreams are made on.

See you in Hell,  
Richard Harland Smith  
New York City

#### Dear Cult Movies,

I'm glad to see that someone is covering Japanese fantasy, or at least Godzilla. What made me decide to write to you is the article by Ron Ford entitled "Godzilla vs. Uncle Sam" in issue #9.

I'm surprised that Mr. Ford refers to those who enjoy Godzilla films as "child-like goofy fan types." I have to say that the last thing a writer wants to do is insult and alienate a large portion of the potential readers of the article he is writing before he even gets to the meat of his subject!

As for the article itself, although *King Kong* was an influence on *Gojira*, it was actually Ray Harryhausen's *Beast From 20,000 Fathoms* that prompted Toho to unleash Godzilla upon the world. Kong himself was a pretty durable movie monster, but to say that he is the most durable after Godzilla made it through twenty movies and counting is a bit farfetched. Besides, as you know, 'twas DeLaurentis killed the beast! Ironically, it will be Toho that resurrects him in the next Godzilla film.

I do agree with Ron that the original *Gojira* is a superior film to *Godzilla, King Of The Monsters!*, but I believe both films are very well done.

In Japan, *Gojira* is still considered one of the greatest domestically-produced films of all time. It is also the first Japanese film to see widespread release to general audiences in the United States. Since it was released here in the United States in 1956, only 11 years after World War II, it would not have been successful in its original Japanese form. Not only would the exclusively Japanese cast not be embraced by the American public, the heavy anti-nuclear theme and comments made about Hiroshima, shelters and so on would have stirred up more than a little controversy. These days when a film is banned, it is actually great publicity, but back in the 1950s, it would have meant death at the box office. Remember that there was still a lot of anti-Japanese sentiment in the 1950s, as there is today in some circles, as well as paranoia about America's "enemies".

Due to this, the Americanization of *Gojira* was a product of the times. By inserting footage featuring Raymond Burr, the producers suddenly relegated the cast of Japanese actors to supporting roles and gave the English-speaking audience someone with whom they could identify. The movie was no longer a Japanese movie, but instead a movie that happens to take place in Japan. Burr becomes a pacifier for American audiences and helps them accept the Japanese characters.

Technically, the insertion of the scenes featuring Burr was done very well. To see how bad it could have been, take a look at *Varan, The Unbelievable* or even *Godzilla 1985*. At least in the Americanization of *Gojira*, the film is treated seriously, without any product tie-ins or camp humor. These days writers and producers in the U.S. are not confident enough to present this type of genre in a straight manner without relying on tongue in cheek humor as a crutch.

As for Raymond Burr's performance, it is an eerie and powerful narration, drawing the viewer into the film. It also is in keeping with the original tone and intent of *Gojira*. A lesser actor could not

have pulled it off.

The best way to enjoy *Gojira* and *Godzilla, King Of The Monsters!* is to look at them as two views of the same event—one from an Eastern perspective and one from a Western point of view. By the way, *Godzilla, King Of The Monsters!* was released in Japanese theatres as well as those in the U.S. in 1956.

As for the rest of issue 9, I enjoyed it very much. I'm glad to see that David Milner's interviews with Ishiro Honda and Akira Ifukube were printed as they deserve to be read.

Thanks again and keep up the good work. I really enjoy your magazine!

Sincerely,  
Bob Johnson

(You make some very good points, Bob; thanks for your comments.)

It is true that the Toho Company Limited was thinking of following up *Godzilla* vs. *MechaGodzilla*, the most recent entry in the *Godzilla* series, with a film featuring *Godzilla, King Kong, and Angilas*, the quadrupedal monster first seen in *Godzilla Raids Again*, but Toho was unable to obtain permission to use *King Kong*. So, the next *Godzilla* film, which is due out in Japan in December, tentatively is going to pit *Godzilla* against both an updated version of *Mogera*, the giant robot that appears in *The Mysterians*, and "space *Godzilla*," a monster somehow brought back to life from the remains of the one created by combining cells from *Godzilla* and a rose in *Godzilla* vs. *Biollante*.)

#### Dear Cult Movies,

I love your magazine! As I'm sure you've heard countless times before, you've struck just the right blend of different topics in your magazine. Every issue you manage to have one or two articles that blow me away, but it's the overall package that keeps me coming back.

Please allow me to make one request. I would really like to see an article on backwoods softcore auteur Bethel Buckalew. With *Something Weird Video* having recently released at least eight of his films for Harry Novak, perhaps I'm not the only one interested in this man's work. Not only did he direct (and in many cases write and produce) such epics as *The Pigkeeper's Daughter*, *Sassy Sue*, *Midnight Plowboy*, and *Country Cuzzins*, but he also worked on and appears in the fantastic *Lila/Mantis In Lace*. I understand he also worked behind the camera on many other Boxoffice International productions.

Hopefully this obvious genius is still alive and ready to be interviewed and worshipped by fans like me. If not, perhaps his wife Marlene or son Mark, both of whom worked with him, could be contacted. I'm so excited by this guy's work that I'm just about ready to hunt him down and beg him for an interview. It would also be great to hear from some of the people who turned up in his films over and over, like John Tull, Jack Richesin, Debbie Osbourne, Sharon Kelly, George "Buck" Flower, Steve Hodge, Pamela Princess—well, you get the idea.

Anyway, please keep up the fantastic work! You've got a reader for life.

Sincerely,  
Marshall Crist  
Manhattan Beach, CA

#### Dear Cult Movies,

Just read #9 of your magazine. I'm looking forward to future issues if this is any example of the excellence in content and writing of *Cult Movies*.

Now, I have two suggestions for future articles and one recommendation.

Suggestion number one: How about a profile

article on Mike Vraney? I think it would make interesting reading to find out how he went about starting up his video company, and how he was able to uncover those lost and forgotten exploitation pictures he has found. (Editor's note: That's a good and reasonable request. Actually, we did a fairly lengthy interview with Mr. Vraney in Issue #6 of our magazine, where he explains these very subjects. Thought it's true, it may be time for another interview with him, since so much new material has been unearthed by Vraney in the past ten months.)

Suggestion number two: How about a piece on Cambist Films. Some of my favorite sleaze pictures are *Vampyres*, *Daughters Of Dracula* and *Ilsa, Harem Keeper Of The Oil Sheiks*, both Cambist Releases. Over the years I have found the output of Cambist to be audacious, bizarre, and quite erotic. In other words, a perfect subject for this magazine.

Now for my recommendation. How about getting Frank Henenlotter as a contributing writer for *Cult Movies*? He's bright, knowledgeable and a hell of a good writer. I first became acquainted with Henenlotter's mind via Research Publications book, "Incredibly Strange Films." Later when I started getting updates from *Something Weird Video*, I discovered he was writing some of the capsule reviews of the videos being put out. His interview that appeared in *Cult Movies* #9 tells me that this guy is passionate in his devotion to exploitation movies and would be a valuable addition to the magazine and its readers.

I think *Cult Movies* is a splendid magazine and I wish you much success.

Best Regards,  
Mike Turner  
Cooleemee, N. C.

#### Dear Friends,

What a great line up of writers you have! You have absolutely the finest possible staff of film people writing for you. Ron Borst, Forry Ackerman, Lisa Mitchell are renowned for their years of film commentary. I'd never seen anything by Dave Milner before, but his dedication to the Japanese cinema is just astounding.

But without question you have a National Treasure in Mr. Frank J. Dello Stritto. His research piece on the early Universal films was jaw-droppingly detailed and insightful. I remember his writings in the old *Photon* magazine, and am eagerly looking forward to every one of his Lugosi pieces you have planned for the future. A regular review column, with Mr. Dello Stritto commenting on just anything and everything about films would be an wonderful treat for your readers. Get him to do it if you can!

Sincere good wishes,  
Fred Randolph  
San Francisco, CA

Got something to say? Write to:

Cult Movies  
6201 Sunset Blvd. Suite 152  
Hollywood CA 90028

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# MOVIE & VIDEO REVIEWS

## Capture That Capsule (1961)

It would be unfair and inaccurate to state that this film is about "absolutely nothing," for it does have an admonishing cold-war theme, and it does set up a slender strand of a story line that coheres; it works. The whole thing hangs together just enough to lull you into feeling that you're watching a movie, just like any other movie. But this film is deceptively different. Much different than any other viewing experience you've ever had. It's a spy thriller without a single peak experience you could justifiably mistake for a thrill. An adventure-mystery that poses no mystery and is devoid of any hint of adventure. As Johnny Legend sublimely states; "Adjectives have yet to be invented to describe the mind boggling none-ness that is somehow captured in *Capture That Capsule*."

This is truly a new experience in film viewing, and the damndest thing to explain or rationalize. You'll be mesmerized by the blandness, but you won't be bored! This is a Bad Film, but you'll be unable to pry your eyes away from this emotionless, meaningless, pro-

cession of stock shots, rapidly-cut talking heads and aimless exterior wanderings. It's such proficiently shot and edited material that you will feel as though a regular film is being shown. But is it? I guess that's the only mystery you'll find in this indescribable assortment of sights and sounds.

This little one-shot wonder has an American satellite fall to earth, and then has the Good Guys and the Bad Guys go after it. The film meanders on and on and on, technically quite admirable, but somehow bereft of any substance of its own. You find yourself listening to the homogenized library music on the soundtrack - really listening closely to it, because there's simply nothing else to do. Nothing ever happens. It just goes until 5 reels are all filled up, then it quits.

For all of this, I highly recommend that all film fans and students watch *Capture That Capsule* and experience this un-experience for themselves. It's in a vacuum all its own. I've endured and enjoyed Ed Wood films, early Keystone comedies, the worst Godzilla films and so on; but have never seen anything as emphatically, defiantly blank as this movie. I'd be interested in hearing the impressions and reactions from others who expose themselves to this uncharted dimension of cinemaland. Hope you, like the satellite, make it back to earth!

Reviewed by Michael Copner.

## Aphrodisiac (1971)

"It is reliably estimated that over 200 million people throughout the world are at present using marijuana."

A documentary dramatization about the aphrodisiacal qualities of pot. In this 16mm pre-*Deep Throat* adults only film there is a slight measure of explicit sex, and lots of talk about how pot will improve your sex life. John C. Holmes and several other porn veterans can be seen, although no credits are given listing cast members. Beautiful ladies with big thighs and nice non-silicon breasts roll around atop young dudes while classical inspired music plays, in an ode to eros and pot induced sexual liberation. Welcome to 1971.

*Aphrodisiac* can be yours on VHS by sending \$25 to Mondo Video, 1724 N. Vermont Ave, Los Angeles, CA 90027. Every fan of exploitation will enjoy this example of adult fare in its transition period, not yet porno as we know it, but certainly no innocent nudie-cutie. Worth a look-see.

Reviewed by Juan Rolando

## Steckler Interviews - Vol. 1 (1993)

It may very well be that *The Incredibly Strange Creatures Who Stopped Living And Became Mixed Up Zombies* is Ray Dennis Steckler at his absolute zenith. The color cinematography, the musical score, the eerie and disorienting mood all came together in what is arguably one of the most successful bargain basement thrillers ever produced. In this new inter-

view-video, film historian John Roberts speaks with Steckler about every pertinent aspect of making *Strange Creatures*. It's backed with a liberal amount of clips from the feature that illustrate the points discussed by Steckler, the director and star of this inspired Cult Classic. Fans and young filmmakers will enjoy this to-the-point overview of how to get quality results filming a one-take marvel. Useful technical info plus anecdotes aplenty make this one of the most interesting interview videos in many years. You can order this one by mail and also receive a B&W autographed 8x10 photo of Ray Dennis Steckler himself! Send \$14.95 to: Ray Dennis Steckler, 2375 E. Tropicana Ave, Suite 2, Las Vegas, NV, 89119.

Reviewed by Juan Rolando

## The Walls Have Eyes

Abandon all logic, ye who enter here! For this is the True Vue Motel, where the rooms are occupied by hot-pantied young ladies eager for a little physical release. This is the motel where ladies - mostly lesbians - are filmed in compromising acts by the motel manager, and then blackmailed! This is the movie that makes all kinds of promises it never keeps, makes wild lapses in normal logic, and thereby keeps the viewer glued to the screen with absolute disbelief.

*The Walls Have Eyes* is another regional adult film that will have you wondering how it ever got made. It was actually filmed and distributed in 35mm sometime in the mid-'60s. Shot silent with narration and dubbed dialogue added, it contains a relaxed, late-night jazz accompaniment provided by somebody's eclectic collection of record albums. Right in the midst of one spicy scene, up onto the soundtrack comes a cool rock version of *The Munsters* theme! Far out.

This print (the only one ever made???) is in good condition and was found in an old drive-in theatre where it was likely abandoned over 25 years ago. A strange B&W nudie relic which any film historian will want to own. Available from Something Weird Video.

Reviewed by Michael Copner

## The Monster Of Camp Sunshine (1964)

Another release in the "Sexy Shockers" series from Something Weird Video. The box cover says this was previously unreleased. I swear we played it at the dirty movie I used to work at.

Terry Gilliam's titles set the whole tone. Our "story" concerns two female roomies, one a nurse who works at a research lab, the other models topless bathing suits (anyone surprised?) They both work off their tensions weekends at the Sunshine Nudist Camp.

At the research lab the doctors concoct some kind of hormone or chemical that drives mammals crazy. It gets into the lab animal feed by accident and, in one of the most (deliberately) funny sequences in the series, the lab rats attack our poor nurse. She gets to scream and fend off rodents flung at her by the camera crew. The Doctor-she-secretly-loves finds





EVEN A BLIND MAN  
BLUSHES WHEN

# THE WALLS HAVE EYES

adults only



nursie hanging out a thirty-story window with hormone enraged rats gnawing at her fingers. She's rescued, love blooms, and the formula gets pitched into the Hudson Bay.

However, our filmmakers have an eco-message to pitch as well. (Yes, environmental issues raged in the prehistoric '60s, too.) The beaker with the formula takes a long route and ends up feeding into the stream that flows through Camp Sunshine. There, Hugo, the Weird Gardener, taking a sip from the stream gets a taste and goes *Monster A'Go-Go*. Meanwhile, the model goes on a shoot at the camp with her agency crew. She also is accompanied by nurse who will be joined there later by Dr. Right. Hugo busts loose and various naked persons are threatened, though not very seriously. The last 15 minutes of the film are nutzo.

The score comes from the same library that Andy Milligan used for his opuses. The film is very funny, peppered with zany title cards and trancer narration. All the women wear the most hideous wigs in cinema history. The pre-Supreme Court nude shots are accompanied by Wild West pioneer music. One of the girls' voices sounds dubbed by a female impersonator. *Monster Of Camp Sunshine* is wonderfully wacky and inventive. Zero budget fun at its best from Something Weird.

Reviewed by Rob Rucker

## Gigot (1962)

Released to vastly mixed critical reviews, *Gigot* played theatrically in 1962, was shown twice in prime time TV on CBS, then quietly vanished. Although Jackie Gleason claimed it was his favorite of all the films he appeared in, *Gigot* has been largely unseen since the mid-1960s. Network Enterprises now allows us to see it again on VHS.

Gleason wrote the scenario and played the title role of Gigot, a deaf mute janitor in Paris. Jackie's pal Gene Kelly directed. Jackie always claimed to have written the musical score for the film.

A bittersweet comedy after the fashion of Chaplin or Langdon, the film has been called a sentimental tribute to silent screen humor. In a 1986 *Playboy*

magazine interview, Gleason defended *Gigot* by insisting that comedy without pathos is like sitting down to a meal without bread. The interviewer ventured, "Not everybody needs that much bread with his meal." Gleason replied, "I do." And there the matter stands.

Whether one loves the film or not, it was certainly a "ham actor's dream" for Jackie Gleason, and an accomplishment for which he was proud to the end. *Gigot* deserves to be seen by today's audiences, and we thank Network for making that possible.

Reviewed by Peter Din

## The Unholy Three (silent and sound)

By 1929 it was known in Hollywood that Lon Chaney was dying of throat cancer. Therefore, I've always doubted the thesis that Universal bought the screen rights to *Dracula* "for Lon Chaney." It would have been difficult for him to have endured another two month production in his condition. With that in mind, it's staggering that Chaney delivered 100% in every department of the sound remake of *The Unholy Three*. His voice(s) are as astounding and engaging as his character make-ups had always been. That the second filming of *Unholy Three* turned out to be Lon's final film is another poetic Hollywood ending.

How good it is that Network Enterprises has both the original silent version and the later sound remake available on video. The later film is at times a shot for shot re-make of the first version, up until the last reel where the story takes a startling departure from the silent rendition. Obviously both films need to be seen by fans of Chaney and of early cinema. (See ad for Network Enterprises in this issue.)

Reviewed by Kay DeLang

## Ozone (1994)

The one-sheet for *Ozone* states, "It's not what you think it is." And certainly it is not.

We receive so many screeners of direct-to-video product, that it's difficult to work up much enthusiasm when another one shows up in the mail. But *Ozone* is tremendous. I hope it's not an exception to the rule. We've followed the career of young filmmaker J. R. Bookwalter almost from the start. *The Dead Next Door* and his other early films "showed promise." Bookwalter has graduated now, and *Ozone* is his diploma. It's an action and suspense filled tale that's loose enough and risky enough to be independent, but slick enough to have the feel of a big studio production.

Imagine how much easier it must have been to direct a film in the days of the studio system, where you worked on a lot with a regular team of technicians, craftsmen and on-screen talent. Indie filmmakers have to assemble that entire family for each new production, then dissolve the family at the film's conclusion. It's not easy working constantly with strangers in each new family, conveying your ideas and getting the results you've envisioned, and having it all come out in a satisfactory way on the screen. Some directors have made over 40 films in this way and still fail to make it happen. Bookwalter has made the magic happen in *Ozone*, and thereby earns our highest commendation.

The *Ozone* in question here is a drug that does more than transform your consciousness. Given enough of the *Ozone*, you will radically transform into something entirely other. Never to return! The sense of danger that hangs over this film is highlighted by surprising effects and a moody musical background that softly underscores the on-screen unease.

*Ozone* is the thirteenth feature film from producer/director J. R. Bookwalter, whose first film *The Dead Next Door* has garnered praise from horror fans worldwide. Within four weeks of its release, *Ozone* has succeeded in topping the sales records set by *Dead Next Door* and has been receiving critical acclaim of its own. It's absolutely worth a look.

(*Ozone*, starring James Black, Tom Hoover, Bill Morrison, Michael Cagnoli, Lori Scarlett, Michael W.

Beatty and James L. Edwards. Music by Jens Moller. Special Makeup Effects created by Bill Morrison and Vince Rossetti. Produced, photographed, and directed by J. R. Bookwalter.

Reviewed by Michael Capner

## The Ape (Monogram, 1940)

With Boris Karloff, Gertrude Hoffman, Maris Wrixon & Henry Hall.

Dr. Bernard Adrian (BK) seeks a cure for paralysis (as well you may after watching this), and feels that injections of fresh spinal fluid from a healthy, ambulatory person will do the trick. Adrian is especially hopeful of finding a remedy for his wheelchair-bound star patient/surrogate daughter Frances (Maris Wrixon).

The doctor is not afraid to go that extra mile to find donors, either: he kills and skins an escaped circus gorilla and uses this simian guise to murder "deserving" townspeople for their spinal fluid.

If Karloff and Lugosi's career trajectories had been reversed, Bela might have looked at this and said, "Poor Boris" - it's that bad. There is one glimmer of tension among all the ennui, and Karloff's only moment of real menace: a scene involving Adrian and an unwilling "donor". The death of the helpless, terrified man reminded me of the unpleasant scenes of Lugosi's abusing (and eventually killing) "Dumb Lew" in *The Human Monster/Dark Eyes Of London*, another 1940 Monogram release.

Director William Nigh was also responsible for the 1934 Monogram pic *House Of Mystery*. I mention this because *The Ape* is a semi-remake of *House Of Mystery*. Both films were adapted from the same Adam Hull Shirk play, and the working title of the earlier films was *The Ape*.

If you revere Karloff, that's all the more reason to avoid this. Available from Sinister Cinema.

Reviewed by Tim Murphy

## Assignment Terror (1971)

Spain/West Germany/Italy; aka *Dracula Versus Frankenstein* Director: Tulio Demichelli, Peter Riethof (English language version). Producer: Jaime Prades. Screenplay: Jacinto Molina Alvarez (Paul Naschy). Photography: Godofredo Pacheco. Cast: Michael Rennie, Karin Dor, Craig Hill, Paul Naschy, Patty Sheppard, Peter Damon.

"While there are men willing to sacrifice themselves for others, nothing will destroy us." - upbeat closing line after *Assignment Terror* has been thwarted. Alien Michael Rennie (a long way from Klaatu in *The Day The Earth Stood Still*) is sent to Earth by the planet Ummo on a mission to destroy the human race by unleashing all the classic monsters upon humanity - Dracula, the Frankenstein Monster, the Werewolf, and the Mummy. To this end he inhabits a human body, sets up his lab in a castle, and goes about collecting his supernatural specimens. Can this be serious?! The cast and direction tries to make us think so. And there are no laughs or even a hint of humor in Paul Naschy's script (he writes under his real name of Jacinto Molina and acts under the name Paul Naschy; here he plays his recurring role of Waldimar Daninski, the Werewolf). With a plot like this, the only hope for the viewer is to get a little bit of boffo fun out of the bizarre proceedings. No chance. The film is terribly dated, filled with go-go dancers, mini-skirts, sideburns, bright garish lights, and generic psychedelic music. This "mod" feel doesn't gel too well with the castle dungeons, torture chambers, cobwebs, and general attempt to build a Gothic atmosphere around the classic monsters. The monsters themselves aren't much to look at either. Waldimar the Werewolf (Naschy in his third lycanthropic outing) is ok. The Living Mummy, however, from the way his head is bandaged, looks more like a man with a splitting headache than a 3000-year-old undying monster. The Frankenstein Monster (here referred to as the "Franksillian Monster" - perhaps the filmmakers were worried about copyright problems) is an ersatz copy of the Universal creation. The actor, in green face

(continued)



and with eyes half closed, looks more like a fatigued costume party-goer than a hideous creature stitched together from dead bodies. One bright spot appears near the end to reward our patience, however, when we are treated to the novel sight of a Werewolf battling a Mummy – a first in monster history. Sadly, this ground-breaking encounter only ends in dour disappointment when the Werewolf goes against his lupine nature and intentionally sets the Mummy ablaze with a torch; every monster-loving child knows that no self-respecting Werewolf would go near an open flame while in wolf form! Oh well, the good guys triumph and all is well in the end. The scariest part of this imported stinker is the fact that this was Michael Rennie's last genre film. Poor Michael, lets give one last "Klaatu Barada Nikto" before we bring the curtain down.

Reviewed by Bryan Senn

## Assignment Outer Space (1961, Italy)

Director: Anthony Dawson (Antonio Margheriti). Screenplay: Vassily Petrov. Photography: Marcello Masciocchi. Cast: Rik Van Nutter, Gabriella Farinon, Dave Montresor, Archie Savage, Alain Dijon.

This early Italian sci-fi entry seems to be one of the more serious attempts to portray space travel in a realistic way. Unfortunately, the budget, script, and special effects aren't up to this lofty goal. The events take place entirely in space or on space stations. By employing some interesting camera angles and photography, director Antonio Margheriti and cinematographer Marcello Masciocchi do well in creating a tight, claustrophobic feeling. This closed-in, no-room-to-breathe atmosphere makes a sharp and jarring contrast to the vast emptiness of space. More often than not, however, the effect is ruined by obvious-looking models and shoddy effects. Though the films is in color, (fairly rare in a low-budget feature of this time), it is not used to advantage. Instead of the bright, stunning visual atmosphere often found in other Italian SF (Mario Bava's *Planet Of The Vampires* being a superb example), this film opts for silvers and grays as the predominant color scheme, making it much less interesting visually. The rather convoluted plot concerns a reporter risking his life to stop a runaway ship about to destroy the Earth. The dubbed dialogue is stilted and reaches absurd heights in melodrama. Lines such as, "The world of human feelings has been much less explored than the whole universe," leads one to believe (or at least hope) that something was lost in translation. Credit should be given for efforts in realism though, for at least the astronauts in this movie have to contend realistically with the lack of gravity in space (refreshing, since most other SF films cavalierly gloss over this serious bit of astrophysics.)

Reviewed by Bryan Senn

## The Blood Spattered Bride (1974; Spain)

AKA *Bloody Fiancee*; Director/Screenwriter: Vincent Aranda. Producer: Antonio Perez Olea. Cinematographer: Fernando Arribas. Cast: Simon Andreu, Maribel Martin, Alexandra Bastedo, Dean Selmier, Monserrat Julio, Angel Lombarte, Maria Rosa Rodriguez.

Loosely based on the story *Carmilla* by Sheridan LeFanu, *The Blood Spattered Bride* centers around a young woman ensnared by a 200 year old vampire-like murderess who seduces the nubile newlywed and turns her against her husband (not to mention inducing her to commit several gruesome murders). The plot is convoluted, with lots of extraneous filler to confuse and annoy. The acting is stilted and poor. On the plus side, this picture features the screen's strangest introduction for a vampire in the history of cinema when the husband finds the attractive bloodsucker on the beach, her body completely buried in the sand with only her breasts and diving mask (!) exposed. The ending is actually quite effective as well, almost making sitting through the previous 70 minutes of tedium worthwhile...almost. The husband, now real-

izing what his wife has become, and who has made her so, riddles the coffin which his wife and Carmilla are sharing with bullets, causing large quantities of blood to seep and spill out of the double sarcophagus. He also shoots an adolescent girl who's been enslaved by Carmilla. The next (and last) image we see is a newspaper headline which reads "Man Cuts Out The Hearts Of Three Women." Still, *The Blood Spattered Bride* is an unpleasant film with no lightness, meaning, or likable characters. In other words, it's no honeymoon.

Reviewed by Bryan Senn

## Body Fever (1969)

(aka Super Cool) with Carolyn Brandt, Ray Dennis Steckler, Bernard Fein, Ron Haydock

Available through Sinister Cinema, Mascot Video Steckler's last starring role features the incredibly strange director as movie buff Charlie Smith, a not-so-ethical private detective so lazy as to barely register a pulse. Smith owns a boat, but not a gun or car, resulting in the first P.I. to have to walk and hitchhike on his cases.

Hired by the confederate of mob boss Big Mac (Bernard Fein) to find a dame named Carrie Erskine (Carolyn Brandt), Smith gets his fair share of beatings as he wades through a bizarre underbelly of smiley thugs, degenerates and drug addicts in a decidedly unsunny Los Angeles. What Charlie doesn't know is that Brandt is a slinky cat burglar in possession of a bag of stolen drugs. The storyline precludes the traditionally expected car chases and wild shoot-outs found in the average detective film although the laconic Steckler finally gets a screen shot at bedding a succession of attractive, if untrustworthy women.

Greg Luce of Sinister Cinema considers *Body Fever* interesting, exciting and funny. (Greg has inked a deal to distribute Steckler's entire film library through Sinister.) *Body Fever* is certainly a detour from the predictable private detective formula and a change of pace for Steckler. Fein, the producer of *Hogan's Heroes*, turns in a good, raunchy, gritty performance and the ending of the picture is as low key as humanly possible. While producers of A-level crime movies spend considerable sums to effect a nasty, seedy look, *Body Fever* achieves that goal effortlessly, by dint of necessity.

Reviewed by James Elliot Singer

## Castle Of The Creeping Flesh (1967; West Germany)

aka *Castle Of Bloody Lust*; *The Castle Of Unholy Desires* Director: Percy G. Parker (Adrian Hoven). Producer: Pier A. Caminetti. Screenwriters: Percy G. Parker, Eric Martin Schnitzler. Cast: Janine Reynaud, Howard Vernon, Michael Lemoine, Elvira Berndorff.

"Life and death – They are alike. But there is also love. Love creates life; love has a right to kill. But he who kills for revenge will be cursed." – a bit of homespun philosophy from Howard Vernon as Count von Saxon. Made by the same man (Adrian Hoven) who brought us the unpleasant and mean-spirited *Mark Of The Devil* (1969) and *Mark Of The Devil 2* (1972), it is unsurprising that *Castle Of The Creeping Flesh* is as nasty as it is. The story concerns a small group of hedonistic party-goers, headed by a brutal Baron (Michael Lemoine), who stumbles into the castle of the reclusive Count von Saxon (Howard Vernon; Dr. Orloff himself from *The Awful Dr. Orloff*; 1962). The Count is trying to revive his dead daughter through some kind of medical operation and chooses one of the visiting girls as an unwilling donor. With an overly talky script (not helped by atrociously dubbed dialogue) populated by unlikable characters, the film's only real asset is an overpowering sense of decadence which gives the proceedings a sleazy sort of attractiveness. The photography and sets are lushly Gothic, and there are some truly erotic sequences involving actress Janine Reynaud, a sensuous beauty often found in the films of Jess Franco. There are also endless unpleasant close-ups of real-life open heart surgery

as the Count (a surgeon) tries to revive his dead daughter using "borrowed" organs; a silly man in a bear suit inflicting face slaps on a cast member with his paws; several gratuitous rape scenes; and a gratingly bad piano-bar jazz score. Though not for everyone, *Castle Of The Creeping Flesh* possesses a repellant albeit fascinating air which makes it nearly watchable.

Reviewed by Bryan Senn

## Charley Chase (3 Volumes)



(Videobrary, Inc.)

These 3 tapes feature some of the best and not so best by the immortal Charley Chase, the world's most famous forgotten comedian of the '20s and '30s. He was popular but never revered in his own time, but today many people – aw hell, I consider him up there with Laurel and Hardy (at his best), and funnier than Lloyd or – ahem – Langdon (but then, so is this table). Although he may have considered his humor "more sophisticated" than his peers' at Roach, I don't think so; he's only slightly less a knockabout gagman than, say, L & H, and especially to modern eyes, he's a cartoon character: with his polished black hair and moustache, dapper dress and highly mobile facial expressions, he's a lanky, zany '20s archetype, caught up in elaborate, perfectly constructed misunderstandings and embarrassing situations, with just the right amount of slapstick.

Each of these volumes averages 5 shorts each and contains at least one gem: my favorite in volume 1 is *His Wooden Wedding*, in which a "jealous suitor" tells Charley his bride-to-be has a wooden leg. Kneeling at the altar, Charley surreptitiously reaches down, feeling around for his bride's "calf" – actually the saboteur's cane – and he panics. A cloudy-lettered title card appears: "Looking Into The Future," and we



see a future Charley arriving home, greeted by his peglegged wife, peglegged children, and of course, peglegged dog.

*Be Your Age* and *Crazy Like A Fox* are also tops and feature a buzz-cutted Oliver Hardy in supporting roles. Not so great are a handful of early (ca. 1914) Sennett shorts Chase directed and starred in (he was all of 21!) that are definitely of historical interest only, with their close-to-zero story lines, twitching hyper-pantomime, and the obligatory snip-the-film, non-sequitur endings. Adding insult, literally, to injury is *Colored Villainy*, with an All Black-Face Cast, in which someone named Rastus (yes, Rastus) (was there ever in history anyone named Rastus?) *hides in a haystack to avoid work!* (Hey, I would.) Reaffirms that Keystone really sucked.

Still, we do get the thrill of discovering here that the young Chase had rotten, stubby teeth (later capped), which probably inspired one of his all-time greatest Roach shorts, *Mighty Like A Moose*, on volume 2, a ridiculous tale of a husband and wife who both get cosmetic surgery (his teeth, her nose) and end up "cheating on" each other with each other. The last shot of this film is one of the most jarring, scary, funny images I've ever seen: Charley's pit-bull "grinning" into the camera with Charley's buck-teeth dentures in his mouth!

Volume 3 has several duds, like *Big Red Riding Hood* and *All Wet*, which frankly is, taking up 20 minutes of an attempt to remove a car from a mud puddle, made worse by some ill-chosen soundtrack music - I mean come on, Mitch Miller Singalong records? (Otherwise the music on these tapes is perfectly appropriate '20s jazz 78s.) The best on this one is *Long Fio The King*, a fantasy about a young American (our hero) who becomes king of a foreign land and ends up having to fight a duel with a prince - Charley finishes out the contest leisurely crossing swords while seated on a stretcher borne by two exhausted orderlies. Playing Charley's sidekick in this film is one of the stranger personalities of the silent era, Max Davidson, the Stepin Fetchit of Eastern European Jewry. With his constant palm-to-cheek gestures and "Oy! I could'ff saved fife cents!" complaints throughout the film, it's a safe bet this one won't be playing on cable.

The quality of the prints used for these videos is uniformly top-notch. If you haven't savored Charley Chase's little masterpieces yet, these are a perfect introduction to a truly unjustly neglected comic, the man I call "The Fourth Genius."

*Reviewed by Tony Mostrom*

## Conrad Brooks vs The Werewolf

Billed as a David 'The Rock' Nelson film, *Conrad Brooks vs The Werewolf* isn't really a film, it's an excretion and that's being kind. I've seen amateur wedding and bar mitzvah videos that were more professional. *Conrad Brooks vs The Werewolf* isn't up to the level of amateur porno.

The producer/director/excretionist, Rocky Nelson, bills himself as the Ed Wood of the '90s. *No Chance*. Why do all these losers always want to be the Ed Wood of today? I just can't figure it out. Conrad Brooks always says that it's vital for him to appear in the worst movies in the world; in this one he sank to a new low, so his reputation is intact.

On the plus side, Conrad is hilarious in the film, basically working with no material. As a matter of fact, he says that they pretty much made it up as they went along. The bizarre plot has Conrad avenging his brothers' murders by the werewolf (Rocky Nelson in a tattered rubber werewolf mask). Conrad's real life brothers, Henry Bedierski and Ted Brooks both appear.

Henry is a spry 84 years old and seems to be enjoying his small part as victim #1. Ted Brooks is hilariously inept as he struggles with simple dialogue. One of the delights of the movie are outtakes at the end showing Conrad yelling at his brother Ted for screwing up the simplest lines of dialogue.

This excretion has zero production values; however they did film in an actual cemetery in Baltimore,

so that helps a little. The movie would have benefited from some music and some 3 Stooges style sound effects. One word of warning to viewers: fast forward through the first half hour because producer/excretionist Rocky Nelson subjects the viewer to an incredibly stupid interview of the Brooks brothers where he asks basically the same two questions over and over: "Was Ed Wood a genius?" and "Am I a genius?". It's pathetic!

But, for fans of Conrad Brooks this video is a must; he's funny! Incidentally, my four year old nephew loves this movie, he thinks it really happened, confirming my suspicion that the ideal target audience for this excretion is age five and under. To order send \$15.95 to Conrad Brooks, 3205 Los Feliz Blvd #11-106, Los Angeles CA 90039.

*Reviewed by Buddy Barnett*

## Jeffrey Dahmer: Movie Star!

*The Secret Life Of Jeffrey Dahmer* (1993) Magnum Video, Directed by David R. Bowen, Written by and starring Carl Crew.

*The Trial Of Jeffrey Dahmer* (1993) Magnum Video, Actual courtroom footage.

These two tapes were released at the same time by the same distribution outfit, and they pretty much tell you everything you wanted to know about America's favorite remorseful Homosexual serial killer.

*The Secret Life Of Jeffrey Dahmer* (called only *The Secret Life* in the film's credits) is a very low-budget dramatization of the events leading to Dahmer's atrocities, shot in Buenaventura, California (doubling for Milwaukee). The film is stacy and for the most part pretty dull. Dahmer lures guy after guy up to his apartment by offering them 150 dollars to pose for nude photos. Once there he drugs and kills them. We see the same event, over and over again. His victims never strip down past their underwear, and the scene always cuts away before the actual atrocities occur. This may be merciful to the viewer, but one gets the idea that the intention is more to save on special effects dollars than to spare the viewer any undue hardship. Certainly the point of the films is exploitation. We are offered no psychological insights of any worth, nor any other redeeming value I saw.

At the end of the film, when Dahmer is finally captured, whatever meager illusion of reality the filmmakers may have developed falls completely apart when we see the very rubbery severed heads he keeps in his refrigerator. The sound mix is also annoying. Apparently the producers were so proud of their (mostly mediocre) original rock score that they crank it up so loud it's very hard to understand the dialogue. As for the acting, it is surprisingly good (except for Lisa Marks, as a very ineffectual probation officer). Lance Mitchell is good as an escaped victim that the police will not believe. Carl Crew (who also wrote the rambling script) is quite believable as Dahmer, whom he does resemble in long shots (close-ups destroy the illusion). However, he does not bring to the role the intelligence and sensitivity which makes the real Dahmer's presence so chillingly unexpected in interviews and court footage. One scene stands out, however: Jeffrey Dahmer cuddling the half-boiled head of one of his victims, wrapped in a towel like a baby in a blanket. He strokes and coos to his "love object," making the hairs on my arms dance.

The courtroom footage in *The Trial Of Jeffrey Dahmer* is much more chilling than anything in this absurd home movie. Psychiatrists for the prosecution and the defense argue about whether or not Dahmer is insane (though clearly he is), taking up most of the running time. Dr. Frederick Berlin argues insanity for the defense, at one point getting so frustrated by the prosecutor's questions that he shakes his fists and closes his eyes, like some histrionic actor doing Lear; making one for the moment wonder who is the real nut here. Also fascinating is a stone-faced Tracy Edwards, Dahmer's last would-be victim, who managed to escape and get the police, blowing Dahmer's cover for good. Edwards seems surprisingly uninterested in the entire proceedings, even a little bored. If I had been through his ordeal, I suspect I would

remember every detail for the rest of my life. Edwards has trouble remembering even the most overt moments.

Through all of this it's hard not to play arm-chair Freud. Clearly, Dahmer's religious upbringing made him disdainful of his own homosexual impulses that he could not control. His admission that he wanted to "have sex with the inside of men" seems to me a way for his twisted mind to make amends for his guilt by making sex with men more like the vaginal penetration of heterosexual sex.

At Dahmer's sentencing, the families of the victims were given a chance to speak to Dahmer. This section is heart-wrenching; the pain and grief of these people is felt with an immediacy that I doubt the greatest actor in the world could ever imitate. Finally, Dahmer speaks of his regret and remorse, and he seems entirely genuine. Perhaps the most chilling thing about this tape is that at this moment you realize you are feeling just a little sorry for this sick, sick man who was as much a victim to his twisted hatred of his own sexual preference as his unfortunate victims. Perhaps there is a lesson here to all those who believe gay people "choose" or are somehow to "blame" for their orientation. Intolerance and self-loathing can lead to nothing but pain.

*Reviewed by Ron Ford*

## Doctor Who: The Daleks

Limited Edition Boxed Set  
(CBS/Fox Video)

Released recently to commemorate *Doctor Who's* 30th anniversary, this double tape set contains ten 25-minute episodes of the British science fiction series, comprising two of the many stories to feature the evil Daleks, mutated little creatures that trundle around in little machines and try to conquer various parts of the galaxy.

"The Chase," a six episode story from 1965 starring William Hartnell, the first actor to play the good Doctor, is a very curious thing. The look is mostly typical of '60s *Doctor Who* (cheap and cheap looking); but, making allowances for the period, some of the special effects are very good. What's really interesting, though, is the mix:

It seems remarkable that you could have a story with so much in it: *Doctor Who* and the Daleks; Shakespeare; the Beatles (by way of a clip from another TV show); giantsquid creatures; the *Mary Celeste* (the crew of which jump overboard at the sight of the Daleks, inexplicably mistaking them for something called "the White Barbary Cat!"); a nutty Hillbilly at the top of the Empire State Building; Dracula and Frankenstein; a Robot Doctor Who; a teddy-bear totting astronaut (played by the same guy who played the Hillbilly!); and big round robots that battle the Daleks - all this, and it's not very good! In fact, it's one of the weaker adventures in the programs' long history.

The end of the adventure sees two of the Doctor's companions, Ian and Barbara, return home; they were whisked away in the Doctor's time machine in the very first episode of the series, nineteen months earlier. For the nineteen months, the premise of the show had been (basically) that the Doctor was trying to get them home to London 1963 again, while his inability to control the time machine caused them to land in many strange places that were not London 1963. Thus this story was, in a way, the conclusion of a longer story; and the end of the first phase of the show.

Back then, the episodes each carried individual titles; and one of these titles, "The Death of Doctor Who," is a definite argument against those fans of the series who insist that *Doctor Who* is only the name of the series, and not the name of the lead character.

The other story included in this set is from 1988, the oddly named "Remembrance of the Daleks," and what an adventure it is, four episodes of explosions, thrills and fun. Simply stated, this is one of the best, with excellent effects and lots of action and energy, with wonderful performances by Sylvester McCoy as the Doctor and Sophie Aldred as his young companion, Ace.

About the only letdown is the way in which the last



surviving Dalek, when confronted by the Doctor and told that he has been defeated, simply self-destructs! This unsatisfying resolution by having the villain spontaneously self-destruct has actually been used in the show before ("The Daemons") and since ("Ghost Light"), and each time seemed to be just tacked on for lack of a real idea. That said, this story is so good that, if you're a fan of the series, you'll end up watching it so many times you'll get thoroughly sick of it!

As for this being a "Limited Edition Boxed Set"...well, in England this set was sold in a special metal container; but over here, it's no more boxed than any other video, coming as it does in a container that's strictly cardboard; and (though I could be wrong), I suspect that production was no more limited than any other *Doctor Who* video!

Reviewed by Ed Barnett

## Dinosaur! (1960)

(New World Video)

What if, in *Jurassic Park*, Steven Spielberg had had the scientists also take blood from an amberized mosquito that had bitten a Neanderthal?

You'd still have a better movie than *Dinosaur!*; but at least the older and much cruder effort offers us a glimpse at an alternate reality, of what *Jurassic Park* might have been: Dumb and embarrassing, or cheesier and more fun, depending on how you look at these things.

Okay, so maybe the only thing the two have in common is the fact that they're both about dinosaurs coming back to life, and killing people; but whereas *Park* features a plethora of thunder lizards, most of which have been brought back deliberately, with an entertainingly laid out "scientific" premise, *D!* features but two giant reptiles, the carnivorous *Tyrannosaurus* and the herbivorous *Brontosaurus* (a bad guy and a good guy dinosaur, respectively, naturally!), plus the aforementioned cave man, all dredged up from their muddy underwater bed, and revived suddenly and confoundingly when all three creatures are struck by lightning.

But there is also the island settings, for both movies; and they are both in color – but the special effects are light years apart; and the effects in *Dinosaur!* are really pretty good, considering when and for how cheaply it was made!

And they both feature kids, although in *Dinosaur!* there's only one kid, a little boy, and he is kind of annoying; but he does love the cave man, and the bronto.

One thing that *D!* has that *Jurassic Park* does not is the presence of two wacky "side-kicks," by way of providing comedy relief; but it saddens me to report that the two characters are really more weak than wacky, and provide pretty dismal comic moments, at best.

*Dinosaur!*, for all of that, is not without its magic. I used to see this on TV a lot when I was a little kid (although I used to fall asleep a lot when watching it), and there was one scene that I would always look forward to, and at which I would always howl with laughter.

The Neanderthal man, searching for food, stumbles onto a little house in the woods. After scaring away the occupant, he wanders around the place, curiously poking around into everything he finds. At one point, he wanders down a small hallway, off-camera. We hear him rustling around in the other room, and then, after a beat (the timing is perfect), we hear a toilet flush, and the cave man comes rushing out, a comic look of fright on his face.

A cave man flushing a toilet. I am fully convinced that, on some level, that is as much as we can ask of any film.

Reviewed by Ed Barnett

## Danger! Diabolik (1968)

Paramount Home Video

A "cult" item if there ever was one. Dino De Laurentis produced, Mario Bava directed and Ennio Morricone scored this inventive and imaginative Italian-French adaptation of the popular Italian comic

book character Diabolik. In a psychedelic, high-tech world of cops and robbers, the black-clad super-crook Diabolik (John Phillip Law) and his lover Eva Kant (Marisa Mell) wage a battle of wits against mob boss Valmont (Adolfo Celi) and Inspector Ginko (Michel Piccoli).

*Diabolik's* stylized escapades are colorfully depicted with Bava's unique panache and his brightly lit, *Batmanesque* cave hideout is a marvel of forced perspective, matte paintings and miniatures, proving it's not necessary to blow mega-millions on sets too dark to see anyway. Other highlights include Diabolik and Eva making love on a huge revolving bed underneath a mound of stolen cash, the theft of an emerald necklace under heavy police guard and Diabolik being buried alive by a wave of molten gold.

Created by sister-act artists Angela and Luciana Giussani in 1962, *Diabolik* established the *nero-sexy* comic genre in Italy. Its success led to a parade of body-suited imitators in Italian adult comic books and fumettis like *Kriminal*, *Sadik* and *Killing*. (The movie version of *Kriminal*, directed by Umberto Lenzi, beat *Diabolik* to the screen by two years.) These later characters were more apt to be homicidal sex maniacs than amoral criminals and by the mid-seventies, the *nero-sexy* genre had degenerated into violent soft-porn before fading out. More recently, the success of occult investigator *Dylan Dog*, a character who sells one million copies a month in Italy, should inspire an American comic distributor to import this title to our shores in a translated version.

Tepid boxoffice revenues unfortunately negated the possibility of Diabolik's continuing screen adventures. This Paramount video version, released several months ago with little fanfare, is recorded in the SLP mode and contains the original Italian-language credits, with the title presented simply as *Diabolik*.

Reviewed by James Elliot Singer

## The Dead Talk Back

(Headliner Productions, 1957)

With Scott Douglas, Myron Natwick, Laura Brock, Aldo Farnese

Just when the horror/sci-fi completist-collectors thought they had filled most of the holes in their '50s video libraries, Sinister Cinema uncovers an unheard-of cheapie, the never-before-seen *The Dead Talk Back*. Realistically speaking, its cast of nobodies, its amateurish look and (especially) its never-released status will obviously prevent it from *ever* being thought of as a "movie" in the full sense of the word and from ever being looked upon, even in a peripheral way, as part of the '50s horror/SF cycle. But (using this same logic) this overgrown home movie also cannot in good conscience be judged as stringently as a "real" (theatrically-distributed) movie. It's a footnote-to-a-footnote in the book of horror history – nothing that needed to be unearthed – but it is interesting in some very small ways; for one thing, it claims to be based on a true incident "taken from a recent psychic research file" (get out your grains of salt!)

After the handwritten credits, the pic kicks off with a poor scene of a man stalking an unsuspecting girl at night (the scene is lit by flashlights). The sequence has absolutely nothing to do with the rest of the movie, which never again sinks quite that low. Aldo Farnese ("introduced" in the credits, as though we'd be seeing him again!) is a bearded, big-headed, pencil-necked "metaphysician" who (speaking to the audience) claims that he has developed a radio with which to speak to the dead. In flashbacks, we visit Farnese's rooming house-home and meet an unwieldily number of his fellow boarders, each one stranger, and a worse actor, and delivering worse dialogue, than the one before. ("Oh, shut up, you potentate of righteousness!" boarder Laura Brock tells the resident religious fanatic.) That night, Brock is shot through the neck with a sharpened curtain rod fired from a crossbow. ("The coroner says there's not much doubt about the cause of death," once cop tells another.) The police investigate (and provide narration) at tedious length, a long dry spell broken only by a Hollywood Boulevard chase (past a theater showing *The Incredible Shrinking Man!*) The boarders convene at Farnese's

laboratory where the body of Brock is in a glass casket and Farnese announces that he will communicate with the dead via his crystals, radio equipment and tuners. "Hello? I'm speaking to anyone on the 18 M.O.C. range!" Farnese broadcasts to the spirit world. (When Brock's voice answers over a speaker, a female boarder mutters with disdain, "Not very clear!") Of course, after a fear-inspired confession by one of the boarders, we get the same old "twist" ending as a hundred other movies and TV shows; the picture wraps up with the camera panning down to "The End" sloppily handwritten on the floor.

There's no earthly reason for anyone to go out of their way to see *The Dead Talk Back*, but here it is for the completists and for people with an interest in amateur filmmaking. It's more of a murder mystery than a horror movie, despite all the talk of ghosts, but it's unique in that the "key" to the spirit world here is science fiction-type radio apparatus rather than supernatural mediums or Ouijas. With only a few exceptions, the acting is deficient to the point of not being funny; bushy-haired Farnese, the poor man's Zandor Vorkov, has the best part but isn't one of the better actors. One very small plus is that the incidental music is lifted from *Adventures Of Captain Marvel* – but it's played over and over so incessantly that it becomes annoying.

Sinister Cinema has paid *The Dead Talk Back* the implied compliment of copyrighting and distributing it – probably one of the first and only compliments the picture has ever received. It's a completely dispensable movie in every imaginable way, but for better or worse the cobwebs have finally been wiped away and it's out there for horror, mystery and SF buffs to inspect. What next – perhaps Sam Sherman's *The Weird Stranger*?

Reviewed by Tom Weaver

## Doctor Who: The Daemons

(CBS/Fox Video)

In the 1970s, The BBC destroyed a lot of episodes of the science fiction television series *Doctor Who*, ignorant as they were of the lucrative markets that would open up for the show in later years. Most of the episodes destroyed were from the first six seasons, when the show was shot in black and white; but a number of the color episodes, starring Jon Pertwee, were also destroyed. (Of those not held in color, black and white film recordings do still exist.)

Of "The Daemons," an extremely popular five-episode story originally broadcast in 1971, a single episode, number 4, is still held on color master tape. The other four episodes exist on B & W film; and there exists a color tape of a 1978 showing of the story in the "movie format" (that is, the five episodes edited together for a feature-length showing) on the public television station KCET in Los Angeles, actually a 3rd (or greater) generation copy of a home recording made on one of the relatively crude home video machines of the time, supplied to archives by a fan who wished to help the BBC to restore what they had so unwisely destroyed.

This story has rightly been held in high regard since its first showing. It has been syndicated in the U.S. in black and white; and the climax, Episode Five, was released on home video last year on the compilation tape, "The Pertwee Years," but it seemed unlikely that "The Daemons" would ever be released in total, as a black and white or mixed B & W and color video; and the tape of the "movie version" was of course of too poor quality to ever consider releasing or broadcasting.

However, due to a brilliant process (the use of which was initiated by fans of the series), a color version of the story has been reconstructed and released on home video.

The color signal has been taken from the home video recording and overlaid onto the black and white film recording, resulting in a picture that retains the original coloring, but looks a lot more like film than video (in which most of it was originally shot). But further problems had to be overcome: certain scenes which, for unknown reasons, had been clipped in the KCET broadcast version, had to some-



how be restored to color without the aid of a matching color sequence (this was cleverly done by continuing to overlay the color signal from the scene prior to where it was cut; I've been unable to spot the joins!); and of course the closing and opening episode titles cut out to create the movie version had to be recreated.

The result of all this work is bound to amaze and delight, although it has to be said that the contrast in quality between the restored episodes and retained episode four is rather stark. This recoloring process has since been completed on another two *Doctor Who* stories, however, with the results reported to be even better.

It's great to see such a classic story in color at last; but, actually, the funny thing is, I can remember watching Episode Five of "The Daemons" at a convention in Los Angeles in 1980, in full color! Where this color copy of episode five came from, or what became of it, I have no idea, but I certainly wonder. If anyone could confirm or correct this memory for me, I would much appreciate it.

Reviewed by Ed Barnett

## Gappa, The Triphibian Monster

*Gappa, The Triphibian Monster*, a film released in 1967 by Japan's Nikkatsu Studios, was recently made available on VHS tape by Sinister Cinema. The film had previously been released on both VHS tape and laserdisc by Orion Home Video under its alternate title, *Monster From A Prehistoric Planet*, but those editions of the film went out of print shortly after Orion declared bankruptcy some years ago.

Unlike virtually all of the other domestic home video releases of films such as *Godzilla*, *King Of The Monsters*, *Mothra*, *Rodan*, *Gamera* and so on, the tape is in the letterbox format preferred by many home video enthusiasts. However, its picture quality is not very good. The colors are faded, and there are streaks in a number of places. The sound quality is much better, but the monaural soundtrack does leave something to be desired.

The Japanese and American versions of *Gappa, The Triphibian Monster* are pretty much the same. However, the Gappa no uta, or song of Gappa, heard during the opening credits in the Japanese version was replaced with some standard orchestral music in the American one, and a brief shot of the mother Gappa crying while she is holding the baby was edited out of the American version.

The monster suits stretch credibility quite a bit, but generally the special effects aren't all that bad. They're not quite as good as those seen in the *Godzilla* films, but they're better than the effects in the *Gamera* series.

*Gappa, The Triphibian Monster* has been called a parody in the past, and there is some justification for this view. At one point in the original Japanese version of the film, for example, a person who is witnessing the monsters wreak havoc says that it's not so bad because they are destroying only the poor section of town. However, for the most part, *Gappa, The Triphibian Monster* is purely a children's film. Saki (Masanori Machida), the native boy from Obelisk Island, plays a prominent role in the film, and many of the film's key elements, such as the baby Gappa being taken from and then reunited with its parents and the young daughter of President Funazu (Keisuke Yokioke), the publishing magnate, being the one who finally coaxes him into standing aside and allowing the baby Gappa to be returned to its parents, are obviously intended to appeal to children.

Although the picture quality of *Gappa, The Triphibian Monster* is not very good, its letterbox format will undoubtedly make it very popular among Japanese monster movie fans. Given this, it would probably be a good idea for home video distributors to give some consideration to making letterboxed editions of more of the American versions of the entries in the kaiju eiga, or monster genre, available on home video in the United States.

Reviewed by David Milner

## The Jungle (Lippert, 1952)

With Rod Cameron, Cesar Romero, Marie Windsor. From Sinister Cinema.

Quite often, one of the best features of a movie shot in a foreign locale is its exotic setting. With Lippert's *The Jungle*, it's one of the few good things. Rod Cameron, Cesar Romero and Marie Windsor constitute a terrific B cast and the film – almost all of it photographed outdoors – impressively showcases India's rugged terrain; it's the next-best thing to being there. (Provided, of course, that any of us would ever want to be there!) But the story is as slender as some of its bulging-ribs extras, so the running time is heavily padded with drawn-out scenes of a hunting party trekking endlessly through the underbrush. *The Jungle* and *Monster From Green Hell* are the only two movies that have ever managed to make my feet sore.



Windsor, the daughter of an ailing maharajah, has progressive ideas which make her unpopular with some of her country's trigger-happy fanatics. Yet another urgent matter of state is the destruction of some remote villages, reportedly by a roving herd of wild elephants. American hunter Cameron and a party of ten natives were dispatched to wipe out the herd, but sole survivor Cameron returned with the fantastic story that the elephants are being stampeded by prehistoric mammoths. Cameron's tale is regarded as a lie, concocted to cover up his "cowardice." Windsor, her Sikh friend and adviser Romero and Cameron head a large party of hunters on a new expedition, where tension mounts between Cameron and Romero – whose young brother was one of the hunters Cameron is suspected of having abandoned.

This is one of those movies which improves a bit on a repeat viewing; trudging through *The Jungle* a second time, when you know better than to expect much action, when you know the mammoths don't appear until the last five minutes, you're able to scrounge for other positive qualities. For one, Marie Windsor may never have looked prettier in a movie. She's one of those actresses who needs to be made-up, lit and photographed just right (Allison Hayes and Faith Domergue are two others), and yet in *The Jungle*, which gives every evidence of having been quickly and primitively made, a touch of dark makeup and natural outdoor lighting somehow turn the trick. She

also gives her usual good performance, as do Cameron and Romero. And the movie does allow its audiences to soak up a great deal of local color – a palace, soldiers on dress parade, monuments, mountain vistas, rushing rivers, etc. (The film was originally released in sepia). The raw, almost documentary "feel" of some of these scenes is alluring, but despite director William Berke's apparent confidence that these provocative backdrops will "carry" his entire film, they can't and don't.

Screenwriter Carroll Young, with his long history of Tarzan and Jungle Jim cheapies, was natural choice for the assignment; very little script doctoring would have been required to turn *The Jungle* into an entry in either of those adventure series. Here and there, Young inserts a smidgen of plot or subplot (for instance, the fanatics' continuing, inept attempts on Windsor's life), but the majority of *The Jungle*'s running time consists of animal fights (tiger vs. bear, leopard vs. boar, mongoose vs. cobra), the antics of some traveling entertainers, and long takes of the party's morose bearers hiking over hill and dale. (Every bearer afforded a close-up soon becomes tiger chow!) And the ponderous Indian musical score, frequently punctuated by chirping bird noises, becomes irritating.

The climactic appearance of the trouble-making mammoths also isn't quite as exciting as perhaps anticipated: Elephants covered with thick coats of dark fur (and sporting long, curling tusks) lumber around in the wilderness in a slo-mo stampede not nearly as interesting as the earlier, "buildup" scenes of quick-footed "20th century" elephants. Several shots are shown at least twice to extend the scene, and a shaky camera and some lightweight "boulders" represent a mammoth-mashing avalanche. (Although the plot could not have been any more simplistic, some contemporary critics mystifyingly complained that the storyline was confusing. Following their lead, some more recent reviewers have made the same complaint).

*The Jungle* was a U.S./Indian co-production shot at the Modern Theatres Ltd., studios and in the Salem jungles. Perhaps more interesting than the movie itself were the happenings behind-the-scenes, as Windsor, Romero, Cameron and his wife, director Berke, cameraman Clyde De Vinna and associate producer Ellis Dungan traveled around India helping Frank Capra offset Communist control of the 1952 International Film Festival, held that year in India. (Read all about it in Capra's autobiography *The Name Above The Title*, pgs. 434-6.) Berke used the local T.R. Sundaram studio as his headquarters during filming, and remained in India after shooting wrapped to supervise editing and post-production work. (The Indian version of the film reportedly runs at least two and a half hours!) Berke had a fatal heart attack on February 15, 1958 while on location in San Pedro with another sci-fi movie, the U.S./Canadian *The Lost Missile*. He was 54.

*The Jungle* squeaks by with just enough elements of interest to compensate for its slim premise and late-arrival "monsters" although perhaps only fans of the movie's stars will agree with me.

Reviewed by Tom Weaver

## Geisha Girl (Realart, 1952)

With William Andrews (Steve Forrest), Martha Hyer, Archer MacDonald

This, believe it or not, is a 1950s science-fiction movie which (until now) was down between the cracks of sci-fi "scholarship": It's not listed in Bill Warren's *Keep Watching The Skies!*, and Walt Lee's monumental *Reference Guide To Fantastic Films* actually lists it as an exclusion. But I'm not casting even the tiniest aspersions on either gentleman for this omission; who would suspect that a lightweight comedy with a title like *Geisha Girl*, and with a Martin and Lewis-esque plot, would have as its MacGuffin explosive pills which "make the atom bomb seem like a breath of wind in a howling storm?"

None of this is meant to imply that *Geisha Girl* (which was shot on location in Japan) is a particularly

(continued)



good movie. William Andrews (a.k.a. Steve Forrest) and Archer MacDonald are American G.I.s in Tokyo who decide to ditch their uniforms and dress in street clothes in order to get into establishments which bar servicemen. But the clothing store where they try on new duds is the front for a bunch of Japanese bad guys with dreams of world conquest; the villains plan to smuggle their explosive pills into ten major cities – and then wipe them out. (They do obliterate one Pacific island). MacDonald leaves the shop wearing a suit with the explosive pills in a pocket, and mistakes them for his vitamins. Forrest, MacDonald and airline hostess Martha Hyer are invited by bad guy Teddy Nakamura to spend a night at his “school for geisha girls,” where Nakamura intends to get back the pills. But Hyer is actually a secret agent of sorts who sneaks out and notifies the police. Another fantasy element crops up with the introduction into the story of Dekao Yokoo, a madcap hypnotist with the magical power to open a safe with a glance, instantly hypnotize any number of people, and “project” punches and kicks from across a room.

*Geisha Girl* was co-produced and co-directed in the summer of 1951 by George Breakston, the former child actor (*Life Returns*) whose behind-the-camera postwar career included *The Boy Cried Murder* and *The Manster* (with *Geisha Girl* villain Nakamura as the mad scientist). Not much effort went into *Geisha Girl*: The plot is silly, everything was done “on the cheap,” and the running time (just 67 minutes) is padded out with mini-production numbers, one of which (a mild strip tease) earned the movie a Legion of Decency “B” rating. Forrest and MacDonald are obviously meant to make us think of Martin and Lewis, with Forrest as a handsome stalwart and MacDonald (who looks like a cross between Lewis and Arnold Stang) as a horny, vitamin-popping dweeb. There are good things about *Geisha Girl*, too, provided that you can be easily satisfied. The movie gives us a look at early-’50s Japan (including the geisha house, a kabuki theater and a national shrine), which makes the film a “historical” record; the zany comedy elements are inoffensively unfunny; and for the sci-fi completist there are, of course, those previously undiscovered SF/fantasy angles. There’s also rugged Steve Forrest (for the girls), pretty Martha Hyer (for the guys) and an Albert Glasser score (for...for...?) Sinister Cinema sweetens the pot with *Night Of The Blood Beast*, *The Cosmic Man* and *The Hideous Sun Demon* trailers.

Reviewed by Tom Weaver

## Horror Talk: Interview With Paul Marco

Hosted by David Del Valle and Jay Jennings

On the eve of the Fall 1994 release of Tim Burton’s *Ed Wood* – and just when you thought the Ed Wood video market was at the saturation point – a half hour interview with the irrepressible Kelton the Cop, Paul Marco, is now in release. To be fair, this is not a new production, but a video issue of a 1989 public access show recorded in Beverly Hills.

Paul Marco is probably the Wood stock company’s most aggressive artificer of his own myth. He appeared as Kelton the Cop in Wood’s *Bride Of The Monster*, *Plan 9 From Outer Space* and *Night Of The Ghouls*, and he’s not any too modest about it either. Clips from all three films are shown throughout the show; at the time, *Night Of The Ghouls* had just surfaced (and the Elvira-hosted Rhino tape wasn’t out), so the *Ghouls* clips were a treat for the original 1989 audience.

The hosts, film historian David Del Valle and producer Jay Jennings, look as if they’re trying with all their might to keep a straight face. Referring to Ed alternately as “Wood” or “Woods,” they buy into Marco’s beatification of his most famous three films as “The Kelton the Cop Trilogy.” (This is like referring to *Dracula*, *Frankenstein* and *Vampire Bat* as “The Dwight Frye Trilogy”) They also seem to accept Marco’s story about removing Bela Lugosi’s *Dracula* cape after Lugosi’s funeral. Every eyewitness account and published chronicle of Lugosi’s funeral and burial contradicts Marco’s assertion, not to mention Lugosi’s widow and son making sure that his wish to be buried

in the cape was carried through. Lastly, several Wood intimates have told me that Ed Wood didn’t even like Paul Marco; his appearances as Kelton occurred because Marco worked for free, and sometimes brought money into the production budget.

Still, you have to consider this interview in its time. Just as Rudolph Grey doggedly tracked down the Woodites for his oral biography (and fifty percent of them are now dead), you have to ask yourself how many cable TV public access shows in 1989 were examining the films of Ed Wood, or interviewing Paul Marco. Del Valle ordinarily deals with loftier subjects than the inept cinema of old Eddie, and he and co-host Jennings deserve credit for mining the subject matter when few others were. The Ed Wood fans should take a look at this well-produced effort, and all Wood completists will want to own a copy.

For order information phone: (310) 859-7016.

Reviewed by Lee Harris

## Onibaba (1964)

Japan; aka *Devil Woman*) Director/producer/screenwriter: Kaneto Shindo. Photography: Kiyomi Kuroda. Cast: Nobuko Otowa, Jitsuko Yoshimura, Kei Sato, Jukichi Uno, Taiji Tonoyama.

Japan is a land rich with tales of demons and devils and ghosts. The country’s history is filled with wars, bloodshed, and the honor of the Samurai. In the Japanese Cinema, history and the supernatural have often been combined to create complex morality plays. *Kwaidan*, an anthology film, is one of the finest examples of a Japanese horror film (forget the Godzilla movies and their imitations, they don’t belong in the same genre with the serious Japanese horror films.) *Onibaba* is another excellent example of what the Japanese Cinema is capable of creating. It is the story of two women, a mother and daughter-in-law, during a time of war and chaos. The daughter’s husband (the mother’s son) has been taken off by Samurai to fight in the wars. The crops have died and so the two women are driven to find stragglers from the battles, kill them for their armor, and sell the seemingly endless forest of tall reeds along the shores of a lake. A man comes, a man who was taken at the same time as the son. He has escaped the battles and tells of how the son is now dead. This newcomer also wants the daughter – and eventually the daughter wants him as well. The old woman, however, is afraid that the daughter will leave her to starve (“I cannot kill by myself,” she moans). The old mother pleads and pleads with her daughter-in-law, but the young woman continues to sneak out to meet her lover. A great Samurai warrior enters the reed-plain and becomes lost. His demeanor is regal and proud, but he wears a terrifying mask – a demon mask. The crafty old woman tricks and kills him. Now the old mother has a plan. Using the mask, she attempts to frighten the daughter into remaining in their hut at night and not go off to see her young man. But there is a twist – the mask will not come off and the films winds its way to its inevitable cinematic justice. The black and white photography is simply brilliant, with the wonderful reeds used to great effect. Continually moving in the wind, these reeds create a feeling of actions and forces moving just under the surface of consciousness. The film possesses a quiet stillness on the surface, yet underneath lies the sleeping spectre of movement, ready to awaken and burst upwards with a sudden and stunning ferocity. *Onibaba* is truly a work of cinematic poetry.

Reviewed by Bryan Senn

## The Narcotics Story

(A Police Science Production, 1958)

With Sharon Strand, Darlene Hendricks, Herbert Crisp, Allen Pitt & Fred Marratto. Narrated by Art Gilmore.

A young woman (Sharon Strand? – there is a cast listing, but we are not told which name goes with which face) begins smoking and drinking because of her bickering parents and their uncaring attitude toward her. In short order, she progresses to barbitu-

rate use, then smoking pot, and finally heroin addiction, becoming a hooker to feed her habit.

This is a very po-faced docudrama, with little of the *Reefer Madness*-type histrionics so common in films of this type. The writing of the narration is oddly contradictory, sternly warning against the evils of narcotics while in the same breath giving pointers on how to recognize, use, and sell marijuana and heroin. Helpful hints for would-be cops are included, too. Police procedure regarding detainment and arrest of suspects as well as searching for drugs and drug paraphernalia is shown in some detail. Sort of a *This Old House* of anti-drug films.

The female lead is quite attractive, with jet-propelled eyebrows that brings “The Astounding She-Monster” to mind. The print is in very good shape, but the color is badly faded, and seems to disappear entirely a few times. The original theremin-laced music sounded familiar, and when the composer’s credit flashed by, my suspicion was confirmed: it is the work of Alexander (*Night Of The Blood Beast* and *Attack Of The Giant Leeches*) Laszlo. The identity of the music editor proved to be a total surprise, however – David De Patie, who, with Friz Freleng, started making *Pink Panther* cartoons a few years later!

Available from Something Weird Video.

Reviewed by Tim Murphy

## Tales Of Frankenstein

(Screen Gems/Hammer, 1958)

With Anton Diffring, Helen Westcott, Don Megowan, Ludwig Stossel

Fans of the Universal monster movies and fans of Hammer don’t tend to agree on much; one group has a fondness for classic, well-made horror yarns and the other has a fondness for...well, Hammer. The two met (sort of) in 1958 when Hammer and Screen Gems (the Columbia Pictures subsidiary distributing the Universals to television) attempted to collaborate on a TV anthology series, the American-made *Tales Of Frankenstein*. The proposed series never got any further than its pilot episode *The Face In The Tombstone Mirror*, which popped up way-back-when on various anthology series and now as part of a Sinister Cinema “double-bill” with the Ohio-made amateur short *The Professor* (1958).

*Tales Of Frankenstein*’s title sequence is (for Universal buffs) a curious grabbag featuring generic clips from *The Mummy’s Tomb*, *Dracula* and one of the Inner Sanctums (David Hoffman’s crystal ball head is made to look as though it’s reading the *Tales Of Frank* introductory narration). Anton Diffring had not yet made a name for himself as a mini-horror star when he appeared here as Baron Von Frankenstein, who in the great tradition of movie madmen has installed a murderer’s brain into his newest monster – and is surprised when the brute attacks him as soon as it comes to life. (How much intelligence is required to realize that that’s an open invitation to disaster?) The question of where to get a “kinder, gentler” brain is answered when midnight visitors Helen Westcott and Richard Bull appear at Diffring’s castle door; sculptor Bull is fatally ill and his wife Westcott begs Diffring to save him, but Diffring feigns helplessness and sends them away. Diffring later defiles Bull’s fresh grave and steals his brain, inserting it in the skull of his monster. But Westcott catches on and turns up at the castle in time to see the Monster go on a new rampage. (The type of brain apparently doesn’t matter – monsters are born to run riot!)

Once nice thing that can be said about *Tales Of Frankenstein* is that it’s probably the fastest-paced production Hammer ever had a hand in; with only 20-odd minutes at their disposal, writers Catherine and Henry Kuttner (working from a story by associate producer/director Curt Siodmak) tell their tale in shorthand. The monster is part of the story specified (by this point, why bother?) and the monster’s later reappearance (with Bull’s brain) sparks a chase that caps the story. (Possibly a scene or two has been deleted; in the end credits we find Raymond Greenleaf credited with the role of Doctor, but Greenleaf never showed up in the episode.) Production-wise it’s well-done, considering the medium, although “outdoor”



sets have that phony, hemmed-in soundstage atmosphere; director Siodmak (and/or his photographer) even manage here and there to frame a few striking shots. Also adding to its comfortable air of familiarity are the stock musical cues, the Jack Pierce-inspired Frankenstein makeup (credited here to Clay Campbell), the typical Siodmak premise and the presence in the cast of Ludwig Stossel, who appeared once (*House Of Dracula*) in the legitimate Universal Frankenstein series.

With his unmistakably imperious, frosty demeanor, Anton Diffring was ideally suited to play the Baron in a vehicle so short that there was no time for character development even for the leading actor. (The sketchily-drawn Frankenstein character is far closer to Peter Cushing's smug, ruthless experimenter in Hammer's *The Curse Of Frankenstein* than to Colin Clive's intense medical student in the Universal original). Don Megowan (the monster) is the right height and weight, which is all that was required in his case, and Helen Westcott is earnest as the take-charge wife; no one else is around long enough to register. It's surprising that this didn't beget the planned series, the late '50s being the heyday of Universal monsters (on TV) and ho-hum Hammers (in theaters); Siodmak says that he told the producers, "You cannot carry a whole show with nothing but Frankenstein stories!" (Siodmak's later *No. 13 Demon Street*, shot in Sweden, was another TV horror series which went nowhere.)

Rounding out this tape are the Paul Frees-narrated trailer for *The Cosmic Man*, a *Black Sunday* trailer, ten minutes of drive-in intermission footage and *The Professor*, about a werewolf (Doug Hobart) and a pair of Communist agents on the loose in the woods near a scientist's home laboratory. This semi-tongue-in-cheek short film has such an unsatisfying non-ending (with the wolf man still at large) that perhaps the moviemakers planned a series for local TV serialization—which (if true) would make this Sinister Cinema offering a twin bill of grounded pilot episodes.

Reviewed by Tom Weaver

## Trauma (Parade Releasing Organization, 1963)

With Lynn Bari, John Conte, Lorrie Richards, David Garner

With a title like *Trauma* and a veteran actress like Lynn Bari prominently billed, I was under the mistaken impression that this was part of the 1960s cycle of "grande dame" – starring horror films (*Baby Jane*, *Sweet Charlotte*, etc.). Alas, such was not the case, as *Trauma* belongs to a wholly different, much milder category (the frightened-young-heiress-in-a-shad-ow-y-house-of-secrets subgenre). Bari, in fact, doesn't even survive beyond the pre-credits sequence.

The pre-credits scene (almost a quarter hour long!) encapsulates everything that's wrong with the full feature: It's slowly paced and yet crowded with so much dialogue and so many plot points that it's tough to get a handle on everything that's going on. Bari is a wealthy wheelchair-bound woman who's being wooed by a shady operator (John Conte), fretting about the health of the caretaker of her estate (Warren Kemmerling) and questioning the common sense of her 15-year-old niece (Lorrie Richards) who persists in going out at night even though there's a killer on the prowl. Bari is later forced under the surface of the water of her swimming pool by a figure seen only by Richards, who is traumatized. Years (and, finally, the opening credits) go by and we find Richards, now 21, returning home to the estate without any memory of the murder – or of the 15 years of her life which preceded it. Her newly-wedded husband, the seedy Conte, orders caretaker Kemmerling and his husky young architect-nephew (David Garner) not to try to jog Richards' memory – supposedly on doctor's orders. Conte is quickly joined in the ranks of red herrings by other enigmatic characters lurking in and around the family mansion. A secret room, mysterious nocturnal goings-on and a (brain-damaged) skeleton in the closet add to the unwieldiness of a movie already sagging and groaning under the weight of too much plot deadwood.

Although released in 1963, this psychological sus-

pense drama was shot in 1961, entirely on location in the Los Feliz and Toluca Lake areas. The production company, Artists XVI Productions, were makers of industrial films who broke into features with *Trauma*, shot on a ten-day schedule (with a full I.A.T.S.E. crew) for just \$69,000. (Bari and Conte were both given a percentage of the picture). Its world premiere was held on May 23, 1962 at Fox West Coast's California Theatre in San Diego with players Conte, Richards, Garner and Bond Blackman in attendance. (The group participated in eight days of "festivities" in San Diego, climaxed on May 26 at the Press Photographers beauty contest at the Kona Kai Club where the "stars" judged the competition). Maybe the reception received by the picture (and/or its tub-thumping "stars") in San Diego was a discouraging one, because *Trauma* went back on the shelf and stayed there until Parade Releasing Organization unveiled it late in 1963. Reportedly the movie made its money back quickly, recouping its negative cost in only 30 percent of the foreign market, and repaying its U.S. print, advertising and accessory costs from 330 engagements. (In L.A. it opened a 22-theater engagement, on a double-bill with *Twice-Told Tales*, on Halloween 1963). Flushed with success, Artists XVI announced upcoming features, including a sci-fi called *Escape To Earth*.

*Trauma's* down-the-line engagements must not have been everything Artists XVI hoped for, because no further features were forthcoming. The plot was the sort with which Hammer had some occasional success in the '60s (*Scream Of Fear*, etc.), but all that writer/director Robert Malcolm Young achieved on *Trauma* was to waste an awful lot of raw film stock. The basic idea isn't bad, as plenty of other moviemakers have demonstrated, and *Trauma* even has a fairly professional look about it. (Jacques Marquette, cinematographer/producer of *The Brain From Planet Arous* and *Attack Of The 50 Foot Woman*, photographed, although no amount of memory-jogging can get him to recall the movie today). But Young tries too hard to make the story twisty and intricate, resulting in a hard-to-follow storyline; many of the subplots go nowhere. Camera takes go on (and on) for several minutes, with Marquette's camera sometimes moving slightly to give the composition a different look.

The actors must have been well-rehearsed in order to cope with these Jerry Warren-ish extended takes; all things considered, many of the performances are more than adequate. (Another anchor around the actors' necks was the unnatural dialogue and awkward plot devices; for instance, Lorrie Richards waits until after she's married to ask new husband Conte what he does for a living!) *Trauma* should have had the makings of a good, creepy budget mystery, but the small-time cast and the excess of talk become wearing long before its 92 minutes are up. The original (16mm) print and the video transfer are of good quality and there's a *Queen Of Blood* trailer to kick off the program. (From Sinister Cinema).

Reviewed by Tom Weaver

## Land Of The Pharaohs

WB (1955), Produced & Directed by Howard Hawks; available on Warner Home Video & Laserdisc.

Let's start by agreeing that the only way to see a movie like this is on the big screen. Its epic sequences are just too spectacular to really work on the tube, which doesn't make it any less effective as an entertainment.

Pharaoh (Jack Hawkins) has returned from the wars and orders his people to build a huge pyramid as his final resting place, utilizing the talents of a crafty captive architect (James Robertson Justice). Along the way, he talks trash with his childhood friend the high priest (Alexis Minotis) and picks up a second wife, the seductively bitch Nellifer (Joan Collins). As the mammoth pyramid rises slowly to completion, Nasty Nellie manages to bump off both Pharaoh & his first wife, finding herself in line to rule Egypt. What does happen to her makes for one of the best endings any movie ever boasted and I won't

reveal in here.

Jack Hawkins was one of my favorite British actors, dependable & genuinely talented. As in all of his work, he gave this his best shot, but he was much too British and his Pharaoh is too vain and despotic to garner any viewer sympathy, which is the fault of the writers. Joan Collins, in her first big part, is campy, trashy & fun in an "unrealistic" sort of way. The rest of the cast ranges from fair to competent, and the high priest emerges as the most engaging and likable character. Specific epic scenes, employing tons of extras and top notch matte paintings, are among the best ever filmed and Dimitri Tiomkins' score is terrific. Hawks didn't like this movie. It was a departure from him and one he didn't quite know how to deal with in the making.

It's worth checking out for its stunning color spectacle & other virtues you can easily pinpoint yourself if you're interested.

Reviewed by Spider Subke

## Horrors Of Spider Island

(The original title of this movie, according to the box, was *It's Hot In Paradise*; and, indeed, that's the title as it appears on screen.)

This West German stink-bomb, number two (sic) in a series of videos called "Sexy Shockers from the Vaults," is perhaps notable for its use of two of Ed Wood Jr.'s hallmarks: stock footage and tedium.

Some guy named Gary and a troupe of attractive young female dancers (eight or more of them; some of them are pretty hard to tell apart!), on their way to Singapore, become stranded on a little island (and if you thought *Gilligan's Island* was dumb, then...well, you were right; and we were never treated to the sight of Ginger in her underwear, while this movie has underwear wearing women aplenty).

This fellow Gary eventually gets bitten by some big spider (bigger than a cat – most mysterious), which turns him into a monster! And then the horrors of Spider Island really begin (truthfully they just continue). After several reels of further nonsense, the monster is driven into the swamp by the flare-wielding dancers, he falls into quicksand, and presumably dies (at least I am unaware of a sequel) (this death by quicksand, by the way, occurs in spite of one of the character's spontaneous and rather puzzling prediction that the monster can only be killed by fire; and at the end, all of the women are rescued (except the ones that were killed)).

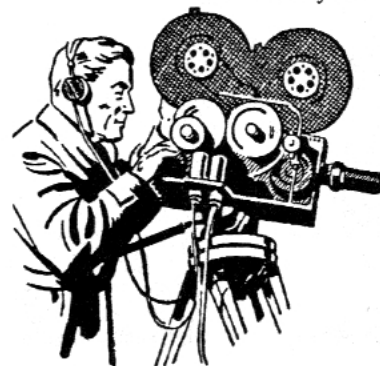
If you want cheesecake, there's plenty of that, with the women in their underwear, in their bathing suits, taking showers, adjusting their stockings, etc... Well, you don't get the cheesecake without the cheese, and this stuff is Velveta all the way!

Quite remarkably, this is touted as being the "ultra rare, thought to be lost, long version!" I propose that the virtues of the short version are due for a revised appreciation. I don't know what the chances are that they'll lose the long version again; but it is something to hope for.

There are honestly moments when this film borders on the entertaining; but it is ultimately too slow and too dimwitted to meet even the lowest of bad movie standards. I have to conclude that, if you think you have the time to waste on *Horrors Of Spider Island* – wise up, you don't!

(From Something Weird video)

Reviewed by Ed Barnett







(1968; West Germany; aka *Necronomicon*)  
 Director: Jess Frank (Jesus Franco).  
 Producers: Adrian Hoven, Pier A. Caminnecci. Screenplay: Pier A. Caminnecci.  
 Photography: Franz Lederle, Georg Herrero.  
 Cast: Janine Reynaud, Jack Taylor, Howard Vernon, Michael Lemoine, Nathalie Nort, Pier A. Caminnecci, Adrian Hove, Rosanna Yanni, Chris Howland, Amerigo Coimbra.

"She loved the games men played with death, when death must win." This nearly unwatchable mess is prolific European director Jesus Franco's attempt at an erotic art film. Unfortunately, because it is Franco, there is nothing "arty" about it – it's just a sleazy, slow-paced, overly pretentious bore. The nearly incoherent narrative deals with a woman who performs sado-erotic acts on stage, pretending to kill her victim/lovers. She starts to hallucinate and actually begins carrying out her act for real. The premise sounds interesting but Franco botches it with his snail-like pacing and pretentious non-sequiturs. "The serpent is poison to us all," somebody says for no particular reason. This type of thing happens regularly throughout the entire film. At one point, the woman goes to a party and all the guests start advancing on hands and knees, barking like dogs! Once in a while a scene does hold your interest, and there are the occasional flashes of competence from Franco, but these infrequent moments are far outshadowed by the remaining boring dreck. For instance, who wants to watch a tepid love scene with the camera (for no particular reason) pointed through a fishtank, so distorting the picture that the two groping actors look more like big-time wrestlers than lovers. "At the risk of stating the obvious – in a word, *Succubus* sucks."

*Reviewed by Bryan Senn*

# Succubus





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# Casual Company

## (The Laugh of the Marines)

### A Novel by

# Edward D. Wood Jr.

With this issue we present the first installment of Ed Wood's seldom seen comedy novel "The Casual Company," written in 1948.



#### Chapter One

The big white clock, with large black hands which was fastened on the wall of the Marine Casual Company office at the U.S. Naval Hospital, Beaumont, California, noted the time as being just a few minutes before noon. The soft ticking of the clock was, however at this moment, overshadowed by the sweet musical notes of the Marine Corps Hymn which drifted from a small phonograph on the right side of the room. The musical sounds drifted into the ears of four men in the uniform of the U.S. Marine Corps, as they stood at strict, rigid attention. Each day when office routine registered a little dull, the First Sergeant, First Sergeant Daniel "Hashmark" O'Hare, would switch on the phonograph, to have his clerks listen, at attention, to the Marine Corps Hymn and perhaps turn back toward their work, when the music had ended, with a new patriotic feeling. Three minutes and ten seconds can seem a very long time when one knows exactly how long three minutes and ten seconds are and one waits, anxiously, for that period of time to pass. Then as suddenly as the first musical notes of the piece had filled the room, it was all over, the record having once more completed its measured spin on the turn table. The First Sergeant's booming voice then said.

The men eased themselves back to their assigned desks as the First Sergeant turned off the phonograph and retired to his desk, the routine having been, once again, completed for another day.

Staff Sergeant Jim Armstrong, when he had seated himself, continued writing on a letter he had started before the First Sergeant had come up with the brain storm to play his favorite piece of music. Jerome "Jerry" Carter, Private First Class, lifted his mystery book and continued reading a

story he had been so deeply engrossed in, and Private First Class Paul "Elbo" Bender, leaned back in his chair, put his feet up on the corner of his desk, closed his eyes and prepared to return to the dreamland from whence he had come.

First Sergeant Daniel O'Hare eyed the empty Captain's desk and chair, then his booming voice rang through the room.

"Where in Hell's the Captain?"

His words made little or no impression on the apparent silence of his office. Elbo coughed once, then folded his arms over his chest while Jerry turned the page of his mystery story. Jim scratched out another paragraph in his letter.

"I said, where in Hell's the Captain," he yelled again and this time the First Sergeant's voice had even more power in the boom of it.

Elbo snapped to attention as the commanding voice of the First Sergeant drove deep into his offended ears, but then seeing that nothing had really happened and that it had not been the fire whistle that had gone off, he settled back in his chair while Jerry looked up, disturbed, from his mystery story.

"He probably fell in the creek when he went hunting rabbits last night. He hasn't come in yet this morning." Jerry let his eyes fall back to his magazine when he had finished his statement to his First Sergeant.

Top, as the First Sergeant is frequently called, picked his nose with the first two fingers of his left hand for several moments, wiped his fingers on his handkerchief then rose his full height and began to pace back and forth across the floor, talking to himself, more or less just to hear himself talk to himself.

"I can't see why in the Hell he doesn't get in on time like the rest of us. Here it is, nearly noon, and

he still ain't come in...Ahhh, someday the Marine Corps will be back to what it used to was..." He stopped his pacing to look thoughtfully toward the ceiling..." Ahhh, then will be the good old days again. All these fool Reserves and Women will be out of my Corps and we'll all be happy again. Ohhh, for those good old days..." Top being a man of many expressions, let the dreamy mood disappear from his face as he walked quickly to his desk and held up several service record books. No one paid any attention to him but he continued anyway. "Look...Look...All these records are waiting for his signature..." He slammed the service record books to his desk then he disgustedly seated himself again, picked his nose once more, then suddenly jumped to his feet, donned his Marine overseas cap and headed for the door. At the door he turned on Jerry.

"Jerry. I'm going to the Ship's Service for some Joe. If the Captain should happen to drop in for a second or two, while I'm out, get him to sign these records, they have to be gotten out."

Jerry looked up from his magazine. "Okay, Top," he called then let his eyes go back to his story.

Top raised his hand's in disgust but quickly lowered them to brush Elbo's feet from the desk, then he left the office, slamming the door behind him.

As the door slammed closed behind Top, Elbo replaced his feet back on his desk, shook his head and turned to Jim at the desk next to him. "Top must have had a bad night again."

"When doesn't he?" Jim questioned with a slight smile.

"I wish he'd drink more often," continued Paul "Elbo" Bender. "He's so much better the morning after a night before the bar...By the way, what



records was he yapping about this time?"

Jerry let his magazine drop to the table, rose and crossed to Top's desk where he examined the records books in question. "The one's on the men that are leaving next month," he replied for an explanation as he let the records fall back to their place.

Proving a point that had not yet come up, Elbo leaned back in his chair. "How do you like that? Seven days to get one hours work done! I suppose it does take six stripes to worry that much."

Jim seated himself. "Hashmark is one of those weird characters that can't live unless he has something to worry about. Now take Jerry. He can't live, properly that is, unless he has some dame to worry about."

Quick to defend himself, Jerry cried. "Now wait a minute." He crossed the room to perch on the corner of Elbo's desk, preparing himself for a long argument. "Don't mention my name and Hashmark's in the same breath."

"I was only using you as an example."

"Well, I'm no example."

Elbo settled farther back in his chair. "He's telling us."

Jim pushed the pages of his letter across his desk as he furthered his argument. "Jerry is always bragging about the girls he finds on his week ends, but really he is worried if he will ever see them again. That is if he ever see's them the first time. I've never seen him out with one."

"I like that. Let me tell you, once I meet a girl, I leave a lasting impression on her." Jerry sounded a bit hurt at the feeling his buddies thought he was lying about the girls he met on liberty, even if he had exaggerated a little.

"Is that why you never see them again?" Jim slid in.

"I see them quite often. At least two or three times after the first date. That is if I like them well enough."

Jim put a lighted match to his cigarette and inhaled deeply of the smoke before he continued. "Name just one instance!"

"Well...Well...take Rita for instance."

Elbo let his chair come back to all fours on the floor. "You take her, I don't want her within breathing distance of me."

"Now, she's not that bad. She's pretty...and she has a figure."

"Yes, she has a figure at that...Like a brick chateau in fact." Elbo said, gesturing the girlish figure with his hands. "And she has quite a car. Tell me Jerry is that Ranch all her's?"

Jerry pushed Elbo's question aside to follow up the former part of his seeming advance. "She has a very graceful appearance. She really is quite feminine. That's what I like about a woman. She has to be all woman. Soft and feathery."

Jim nodded. "Yet, she's also quite stupid."

Jerry rose quickly from the edge of the desk and walked back to his own desk where he sat on its corner. "Now you can't call her stupid. She's just quiet that's all. We can't call her stupid. She's just quiet that's all. We can't all be the life of the party."

"I thought you didn't like her?" questioned Elbo, always ready to tantalize.

"Well, I don't."

Looking at Jim, Elbo winked. "Yet, here you are standing up for her."

"Well...Well...I...that is..."

"Ah, you do like her," again Elbo turned to Jim "I'm sure she would like to know that, eh, Jim? The way he treats her when she is around here, one would think she was a leper or something."

Jerry considered this momentarily then walked behind his desk, seated himself and once more picked up his magazine. "It's hard to explain. She's quite intelligent. Sometimes I like her. Sometimes I don't. Ah, you guys of low mentality

wouldn't understand anyway. All you can think of is sex."

"There's something else?" jested Elbo.

"I'm mean to her in front of you guys for reasons of my own. Reasons that I hope never become apparent to anyone, including her."

"If being a writer makes you talk in circles, I don't want any part of it," said Elbo gesturing a finish to his end of the argument.

Jim found a new opening. "Why don't you give the kid a break and at least talk civil to her?"

"Aw nuts."

"Is this your true feelings?" questioned Jim.

"She's a good kid, but who like's good kids?"

"And I'm sure you are not thinking of all the...women...you know up in Los Angeles," continued the taunting Elbo.

Jim looked at the fire in the eyes of his two junior non-commissioned officers and decided, quickly, that the argument had gone far enough. He let his eyes drift back from the window through which he had been gazing, to fall on Jerry. "Well, let it go for now. I started this, so I'll be the one to finish it."

Jerry wasn't ready to end the argument. "Why let it go? Let's get to the bottom of at least one argument during this enlistment."

Jim pointed to his four stripes. "These and me say, but it."

Jerry threw his mystery magazine to the floor and looked toward Elbo, who had, once more, closed his eyes and leaned back in his chair. Every muscle tightened in Jerry's face and neck. "There he goes again. Everytime he can't finish an argument he pulls his rank. Alright, surrender to rank, only to keep harmony in this office. After all we've all been sent here in the form of a rest after our overseas tour. Why should the thoughts of some woman break up that rest period. But it seems because I am the newest arrival to the ranks of the permanent personnel of this office that you can pick on me anytime, but I can't come back at you. Okay...if that's the way you want it...Some day the worm is going to turn...But may I ask the Staff

Sergeant one last question?"

Jim smiled. He wasn't going to be out done by any Private First Class if he could help it. "Sure," he said softly.

Jerry smiled then eyed him slowly and began to walk aimlessly about the office. "Speaking along the same line...woman...What do you plan to do if Nadine and that girl friend of yours, back home, should ever meet?"

Elbo looked at the two men and knowing what the argument was about to lead to, rose from his desk to peer out of the window. He wanted no part of the argument any longer.

Jim decided to play along for the moment. "I think when the time comes it will be my worry, and nobody else's."

Jerry knew, now, that he'd found Jim's weak spot. "It would prove a very difficult situation, wouldn't it?" he continued, paying no attention the slow red color of anger that slowly crept into Jim's face.

Jim straightened in his chair. "I have no fears of their ever meeting. Joan is nearly three thousand miles from here. Nadine knows all about her anyway."

"But does this, Joan, know about Nadine?" shot in Jerry.

"Of course not," replied Jim, preparing himself for the eventual end.

"I wish I could say that I had some girl waiting a number of years back home for me, and no questions asked when I got there. This Joan sure must be one swell girl."

Jim came out of his chair. "Are you insinuating that Nadine isn't?"

Jerry looked away from Jim, cautiously. "No...No...I'm only talking to hear myself talk."

Jim threw his big body from his chair, toward Jerry. "Listen you...Keep your..."

"Cut it," cut in Elbo turning quickly from the window and resuming his seat behind his desk. "Here comes the Captain."

*Continued next issue.*





# Adventures Of A Ghoul From Out West

by Jan Alan Henderson

Any fan of *Famous Monsters Of Filmland* magazine is probably well familiar with the "Cool Ghoul," John Zacherle. Having graced the cover twice, as well as two feature articles, Zach's exploits have been well chronicled in *Famous Monsters*, as well as *Castle Of Frankenstein* and many other genre books and magazines. From his beginnings as Roland in Philadelphia, to his more recent '80s *Horrible Horrors* videotape, Zach has been considered one of the top late night horror movie hosts for the better part of three decades. His cauliflower brains, gelatin amoebae and "scientific" lectures have endeared him to lovers of Theatre of the Bizarre.

But there is another side to this many-faceted ghoul – the musical side. Horror fans all know that Zach made some classic shock records in the '50s and '60s, and has continued to record into the '90s with guitarist/producer/arranger Mike Gilks and others. For those of us who live outside the tri-state area, there is another musical side of Zach, which is most probably unknown to us – the radio side.

After Zach's last "Cool Ghoul" incarnation on WPIX-TV, Channel 11 New York, New York's *Chiller Theatre*, Zach began his gruesome odyssey into the world of radio. In 1965 he began hosting the popular dance program *Disco Teen* on New Jersey's UHF station, Channel 47.

*Cult Movies* caught up with the Cool Ghoul recently on a stormy evening, to ask him about his radio career.

Zacherle: The *Disco Teen* started because the floor manager from the *Chiller* show on WPIX got a job with the newly formed UHF station in New Jersey, Channel 47. He suggested that we do a dancing show with me in the old costume, playing the current hits, and the station owners bought it. Channel 47 was way ahead of its time, because they were interested in doing things that were viable, and things that no other station in the New York area was doing at the time. They also doubled as a foreign language station. They'd have things like bullfights from Mexico, and wrestling, and at that time, that sort of programming just wasn't done. As far as the English language programming, they had a couple of interview shows, and our show. We'd do things like play three songs in a row, as opposed to a song, talking, another song, a commercial. We were more concerned with presenting the music than making this a commercial TV show. The kids would dance their heads off, and I would do a little bit of the experimenting that I did on the late night horror shows, and we had a great time. The show ran from 1965 to 1967. It was great – the kids knew me, because they were growing up along with me, and I was growing up with them. We had a lot of live bands from the high schools, as well as some top name bands who had hits of the day.

*Cult Movies*: Who were some of the big names you had on?

Zacherle: The Blues Magoos, Lovin' Spoonful, and The Doors.

CM: The Doors! Amazing! Gimme the lowdown on The Lizard King, Jim Morrison.

Zacherle: Ha ha! He was pretty slick – he was in his prime in those days. The band had just come out with their first album and their first his *Break On Through* was climbing up the singles charts, followed quickly by *Light My Fire*. So all the kids on the show were dancing to this new Doors music, and Morrison just couldn't believe it! The

custom of the show was to have the bands mingle with the audience as the music was playing and they were dancing. As Morrison passed by me, he said, "This is the goddamndest television show I ever saw!"

One of the other weird things I remember about the show was we wound up trying to dance to Moby Grape's hit *Omaha*. Anyone familiar with the tempo of the song *Omaha* knows that it was '60s "speed metal" and that the tempo would give any normal person a good case of St. Vitus Dance. Our whole thing was to play music that created a visual ambience for people to dance to. And the segues were all lined up that way, so the dancers could switch from one dance to another. We'd play such diverse things as James Brown and Jimi Hendrix, which if you really think about it are connected, the Beatles, the Stones, Eric Burdon. We had a grand time, my boy!



Towards the end of the show, I had a friend who I'd stop by and see on the way home. This guy said, "Now that the TV show's ending, you ought to try your hand at radio." He got me hip to the fact that WOR had changed the station's format from album rock to singles. When WOR dropped their album format, WNEW-FM, New York, picked it up, along with some of the DJs. WNEW had been experimenting with this style of programming five to six months before *Disco Teen* was cancelled. So after *Disco Teen* ended I went over and saw the program director, and was hired to do weekends. They hired me because I was familiar with most of the groups that were out at the time. We had either played their records on *Disco Teen* or they had been guests. And I had a handle on the new albums and singles coming out. Singles were very big in those days. We got to play the complete albums, which was great – it was like being on a college station today, where almost anything goes. We also got to do some real informal commercials about who was playing around town at the Fillmore East or discotheques for that week. There were so many clubs it was like a community bulletin board – everybody wanted to hear about that stuff. I must say if there's a musical era I'm partial to, it's the '60s and the '70s.

CM: You were emceeing rock shows at the time, weren't you?

Zacherle: We were advertising a lot of shows at the Fillmore East in late 1967. So I jumped in the old VW bug, and went down to the Fillmore East just to check out the scene. It was definitely the classic era, and I began emceeing a few shows.

CM: Any outrageous moments at the Fillmore East you care to recall?

Zacherle: The night The Crazy World Of Arthur Brown played was pretty wild. No one had seen Arthur Brown up to this time, but his hit, *Fire*, was being widely played. Now, I was up wandering around the balcony. What was cool about this gig for me, was that all the security people and the concession people remembered me from growing up watching the horror pictures, so I could just roam around on my own and catch the acts. They'd see me at the door, and let me in free. But when Arthur Brown set his head on fire, that blew the audience away! He starts the show walking down the main aisle with his head on fire! Totally unexpected! Everybody just went crazy!

The weird part about it is when the Fillmore opened, the authorities were really worried about these long-haired kids, and they were sending in the fire marshals whenever possible. The police were all around to make sure everybody behaved. There'd be no smoking in the theater – ho, ho – none of that naughty stuff – because of the fire hazard, no because you were going to get high. Bill Graham would occasionally take the mike and inform the happy hippies that there was no smoking in the theater. Of course, everybody would groan, and you couldn't see through the smoke!

But that was an era where the artists regained control of their music. You had young prodigies, like the drummer of Santana, who were the product of '40s and '50s big band and swing musicians, and their kids were prodigies at something like the age of 14. There was definitely a change taking place. It was the Summer of Love. The Doors played at the Fillmore twice, but after the second album it seemed poor old Jim was having his problems. One of the outstanding bills we saw there featured Moby Grape. It was great to see them live.

I always remembered the Jefferson Airplane's free concert in Central Park. Right after that, I got the five-day-a-week job. It was a magic time. The Airplane were great. When you saw them on stage, they put 120 percent into their show.

Now, Hunter College was a great place. I remember a great, great show by The Lovin' Spoonful. They didn't last too long, did they? Also got to see a show by Pink Floyd at Hunter College. It was great to hear that enormous cosmic energy within the confines of a college auditorium. That was around their second album, *A Saucerful Of Secrets*. I actually got to hang with Pink Floyd a few months later at the Fillmore. The light shows in those days were magnificent! Most especially the Floyd. The concerts today are great shows and rather extravagant. But what intrigues me is the old primitive stuff, the liquid oil, psychedelic light shows behind screens and all that, were great. Those oil light shows used to remind me of my amoebae – but at this point, my boy, so do you!

I see the clouds coming up over the skyscrapers here in Manhattan – a storm with plenty of lightning in it. So I must go tend to my monster, my boy. This is a ghoul out in the East, signing off to a ghoul out in the West. Good Night – whatever you are!

CM: Gulp!

Zach still holds court over the radio waves on Saturday mornings on WXRK in the New York area, playing classic oldies from the '60s and '70s. It's a pity that this show isn't nationally syndicated, because Zach's tune selection and distinctive voice are the stuff rock 'n roll dreams are made of. ■



# Cult Around The Clock

## By Johnny Legend

Getting Closer Every Day Dept....Nearly 13 years ago, the *Fangoria* newsletter listed the upcoming production of *Emmanuelle Meets the Aztec Mummy*. With the original "Azzie" now back on the rock tour/convention circuit, the eventual realization of this cinematic wet dream seems more eminent than ever. Note everyone's favorite Mexican mummy pausing to pose with the world's foremost Emmanuelle, Monique Gabrielle, at a recent *Chiller* Convention in Jersey.

The ever-relentless Fred Olen Ray is back-in-the-sin-saddle with a trio of brand new box office brown-baggers starting with *Bikini Drive-In*, directed by Fred, and featuring Conrad Brooks as the projectionist, Dave Friedman as the Villain, Gordon Mitchell as Goliath, plus cameos by Forry Ackerman, Stanley Livingston, Anthony Cardoza, Dave Hewitt, Michelle Bauer and Ross Hagen. *Haunter In The Dark* features the satanic pairing of Linda "The Exorcist" Blair and William "Abby" Marshall along with Michael "Werewolf of Woodstock" Parks and Edward Albert. Rounding out the tempting trilogy - *Biohazard II* starring Chris Mitchum.

By the time you read this you will have already missed the incredible 30 year anniversary *Spider Baby* birthday reunion scheduled for midnight, April 1st, at the Nuart Theatre in Los Angeles with cast members, Sid Haig, Beverly Washburn, Quin "Young and the Restless" Reddicker and others along with director Jack "The Big Doll House" Hill. Do not despair completely, because *Spider Baby* will be continuing it's nationwide theatrical revival soon at a theatre or cobweb near you. And finally, after two decades of bad dupes and dirty release prints, *Baby* has been immaculately transferred direct from the original negative and is available in pristine video perfection for the first time, exclusively from the film's writer/director, and featuring an in-depth interview conducted by me: Send \$29.95 plus \$3 postage to: Jack Hill, 6546 Hollywood Blvd., Suite 210, Hollywood, CA 90028.

Also available for the first time from Mister Hill, the even rarer *Pit Stop* starring Sid Haig, Beverly Washburn, Brian Donlevy, Titus Moody, Ellen Burstyn, and that kid from *East Of Eden*, Richard Davalos. Same price and address as *Spider Baby*, with another Hill and Legend interview!!!

David Lindsey of Atlanta is just putting the finishing



touches on his monolithic CD *Stock Footage - Music From The Films Of Roger Corman*, featuring artists like Plan 9, The A Bones, The Sub-Sonics, Man Or Astro-Man? performing the likes of *Candy Strip Nurses*, *Bucket of Blood*, *House Of Usher*, and my contribution - a bone-rattling cover of Zacherle's *Teenage Caveman*. Plus liner notes by the ever-vigilant Fred Olen Ray. For more info: Worrybird Records, P O Box 94585, Atlanta, GA 30347.

Negotiations are also under way for a Jack Hill double-bill single release: Lon Chaney Jr.'s immortal rendition of the *Theme From Spider Baby* b/w Pam Grier's title track from *The Big Doll House*.

Where the Hell is Arch Hall Jr. Dept: The elusive Mister Hall sent two emissaries to our recent Arch Hall film fest in Hollywood to wish us well and reveal very recent photos of himself mugging alongside a big-screen laser showing of *The Sadist*. Billy and Miriam of Norton Records are planning to release some ultra-rare recordings of Arch Jr. and his band live from the sixties!

Rudy Ray all the Way Dept: On a recent four-day stint at the Ivar Theatre in Hollywood, Mr. Rudy Ray Moore

really laid on the hype for his two on-hand celebs - namely Snoop Doggy Dog and yours truly.

Those *Blood Diner Boys Are Back* Dept: Producer James Maslon and writer Dukie Flyswatter are teaming up again for a major new blaxploitation feature - *No Mo' Clothes For Whitey*.

Eat Your Heart Out Nancy Kerrigan Dept: Unlike these media monster "Whinebags-on wheels," I have actually been attacked twice in less than a year, and you won't see me down on my knees sobbing my Barbie-doll eyes out. The first attack came during a rockabilly club gig when a psychotic-hayseed heckler inexplicably snapped during the second verse of my new hit single "Mexican Love." After being grappled to the ground by club personnel, the unfortunate hunk of human flotsam was then pummeled to a pulp and tossed into the gutter while I finished the song without missing a beat. Then, a few weeks ago at the all-star wrestling show in Maywood, Ca. a drunken Mexican adult fan cleverly sidestepped security, leaped onto the apron and tried to rip off my priceless pair of silver lame Fred Blassie pants, succeeding only in tearing a large hole in the crotch!

Geekmania Grips America Again Dept: For the umpteenth time in as many years, random dead-beats and media wanna-be's ranging from R.E.M. to Jay Leno to Rush Limbaugh are jumping on the Johnny Legend/Fred Blassie bandwagon hoping to add some spark to their spent careers. For those of you who don't know, I wrote and produced arguably the most notorious record of all time - *Pencil Neck Geek* - performed by the King of Men himself:

Classy Freddie Blassie. And, with the depressing regularity of dandruff, luminaries such as the above-mentioned are flaunting around slogans and catch-phrases from the song. Blassie had to call Limbaugh personally and chew up nearly 15 minutes of national air time taking the rotund rabble-rouser to task for daily gook abuses.

Pencil-Neck Paranoia reached an absolute pinnacle on a recent episode of *Northern Exposure* during which, as part of the plot line, an impressionable listener actually commits suicide as a result of hearing *Pencil Neck Geek* on the radio. This led naturally to all-sorts of pseudo-soul-searching and other manifestations of "New Age McCarthyism" as the disc jockey and other cast members had to grapple with such highfalutin' concepts as "Art vs. Social Responsibility" and other Tipper Gore-ian notions.

That about wraps it up for now - watch for me in *Children Of The Corn III*, the new Ramones video directed by Tom Rainone, and until next time, Good Night, Good Luck, and Good Riddance.....

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# Anita Page Remembers Lon Chaney



Anita Page, veteran movie actress, recently took time out to reminisce with the staff of *Cult Movies* about movie legend Lon Chaney. Miss Page worked with Chaney in one of her earliest movie roles in *While The City Sleeps* in 1928.

Anita Page's movie career lasted from the late 1920s to the mid 1930s when she retired and married an Admiral in the US Navy. She was under contract to MGM studios during her film career and appeared in many important films including: *Our Dancing Daughters*, *Our Modern Maidens*, *Broadway Melody*, *Free And Easy*, *Sidewalks Of New York* (both with Buster Keaton) and many others.

Miss Page has recently undergone a resurgence in popularity, with the recent releases of many of her films on videotape and the frequent showings of her movies on TNT cable channel. She was recently coaxed out of retirement and just finished a guest starring assignment in a murder mystery entitled *Sunset After Dark*. *Sunset After Dark* will be released later this year.

In future issues Anita Page will reminisce with *Cult Movies* readers about her experiences with Buster Keaton and other co-stars.

"He was a charming man and very interesting, but he had a sort of mystery about him. I didn't know much about his private life, nobody did, he kept it to himself. But he did like to talk about films with me. I wasn't interested in his private life; I couldn't care less, but I was interested in his work.

"I remember seeing him in *The Hunchback Of Notre Dame*, he was marvelous in that, so I was very excited to work with him in *While The City Sleeps*. I later found out that he specifically asked for me on that picture because he liked my work in *Our Dancing Daughters*. It was a thrill for me. We worked beautifully together.

"He taught me a lot about acting technique. He always said that acting started with your eyes. He liked the way I used my eyes in *Our Dancing Daughters*. That is one reason he picked me to work with him. He felt that your eyes were your starting point for your characterization. Of course, you had to use your body, that's very important too, but even more important, according to Chaney, was using your imagination - what you were going to do with your character. You wouldn't have the whole role figured out in your mind, but you would have certain things that you had to do, like gestures, planned out in advance. You created a character but you also put in a little of your own personality in it. Chaney, who had done so many pictures, was a master at this.

"Chaney was a strong personality, and he dominated his movie sets, but he was very helpful to everyone on the cast and crew. I was very young and inexperienced when I made *While The City Sleeps* and I'll never forget the boost of confidence that Chaney gave me by picking me as his co-star. He was one of the greatest actors that ever lived."

— Anita Page



Above: Anita Page in *Jungle Bride* (1933)

Left, Below: Page with Lon Chaney from *While The City Sleeps* (1928).







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# WHATEVER BECAME OF BEATRICE WOODRUFF WEEKS

# ?

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Bride of Bela  
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**by Frank J. Dello Stritto**

In late July 1929, Bela Lugosi arrived in San Francisco with a touring company of *Dracula*. Within 10 days he had wed and separated from Beatrice Weeks. The Weeks-Lugosi marriage has all the credentials of a wild fling from the Roaring '20s – she a wealthy, widowed heiress; he a rising stage and screen star. Both marrying for the third time; both living life to its fullest. Lugosi breezed into town, and breezed out never to see his bride again. She hopped over to Reno and filed for “incompatibility.” Their divorce was final in December.

Weeks is a minor but pivotal figure in the Lugosi legend. His marriage to her and his allegedly torrid affair with screen

siren Clara Bow prove that the commanding, caped figure once cast spells over women. Weeks and Bow were both financially independent, quite younger than he, and each first saw him in an audience watching *Dracula*. The sexual element in the Lugosi mystique has worn a bit thin with time, and without it Lugosi is less a Prince of Darkness and more a high lord of camp. But in his prime in the 1920s – before the movies had influenced our view of the man or the actor – Lugosi was reaching across the footlights to sweep women of position and means off their feet. *Dracula* himself could have done no better.

*(continued)*









Such is the stuff of legend. In fact the marriage was not an impulsive affair, as it is often described. Their plans to marry were announced to the press days before the marriage. Lugosi and Weeks had already known each other for about a year, during which, if Lugosi is to be believed, the two had been in frequent contact. When Lugosi married this rich, young widow, his film career had stalled. The *Dracula* tour of 1929 was only undertaken out of sheer necessity. With his limited English, he was having trouble finding roles in sound films and as always needed the money. Not until after the marriage did he start regularly landing character parts. *Dracula* was not filmed until a year later.

Lives cannot be told from newspaper clippings, but Beatrice Weeks' has left no other trace. The clippings tell a depressingly familiar tale, one that can be documented today only because the four men in her life each gained prominence in their respective fields. Beneath the glitter of her showbiz style marriage to Lugosi lurks the sobering tale of a woman slipping from desperation to destruction.

Beatrice Woodruff was born in 1897 in New York City. Her father, John S. Woodruff graduated from Harvard shortly before her birth, and soon afterwards entered a career in naval law. He eventually became Director of the Bureau of Law of the United States Shipping Board. Through her mother, Marion Parker, Beatrice could trace her lineage back the Pilgrims. As befitting a young woman of her rank she attended the exclusive Wellesley school and a European finishing school. There, she developed a proficiency in foreign languages. In 1921 she married Goadby Mills, son of a prominent New York stock broker. Immediately following their large, elaborate ceremony, Mills told his bride, 20 years his junior, "Now we are married and the main point is that you are legally mine." In the succeeding weeks Mills proved his claim. After 57 days Beatrice could stand no more and the two separated. Mills died 10 years later in a plane crash.

In January 1922, Beatrice filed for divorce on the grounds of cruelty in Los Angeles, where she had apparently gone for solace. She may have gone

because she was already developing health problems, and needed milder winters than could be found in New York. While on the West Coast, she met Charles Peter Weeks, a San Francisco architect of considerable local notoriety. Like Mills he was 20 years older than Beatrice. But whereas Mills lived in his father's shadow and off his wealth, Weeks was a self-made man. His firm, Weeks and Day (presumably no pun intended), was responsible for many of the finest structures of San Francisco's post-earthquake renaissance. He designed a number of fashionable homes, apartment buildings and hotels on Nob Hill. About the time he met Beatrice he was caught in the roguish position of admitting that a magnificent golden staircase he had just designed was an unaccredited duplicate of that in the Borgos Cathedral. His romance with the still-married Beatrice raised eyebrows in the society circles into which he had risen. On January 30, 1923, one day after her divorce from Mills was final—she married Weeks. She chose not to relive any moments from her first marriage; this ceremony was quite modest.

Nothing is known of Beatrice Weeks' life for the next five years. She and her husband settled into the Brocklebank Apartments, which of course Weeks had designed. Their contentment, if any, was shattered in March 1928. Pulmonary disease, which would plague her for the remainder of her life struck Beatrice at age 31. As she hovered very near death, Weeks died without warning in his sleep on March 25. The cause of his death was described only as due to "a malady from which he had been suffering for a many months." Such wording is occasionally a euphemism for some dark vice or affliction, but on Weeks there's no information, dark or otherwise. He died in the room next to Beatrice, but she was not told of his death until sometime afterwards.

That Beatrice ever fully recovered, either emotionally or physically, from this ordeal is doubtful. The unexpected death of her father at age 58 in January 1929 caused yet another setback. Perhaps the only bright spot for her in these tragic months was meeting a handsome, exotic actor in the summer of 1928.

A touring company of *Dracula* arrived in San Francisco in mid-August 1928 for a 3-week run. The troupe booked into the Mark Hopkins Hotel, just a short walk from the Columbia Theatre and, incidentally, one of Weeks' architectural masterpieces. *Dracula* opened on the 20th to rave reviews, and its star was soon a celebrity throughout the Bay Area. Bela Lugosi at 46 was at the height of his powers. Commanding and aristocratic in presence, riding success as *Dracula*, he was finally poised to claim the stardom that war and political upheaval had denied him in Hungary.

Shortly after the San Francisco premiere of *Dracula*, Lugosi attended a reception at Mare Island, and met a shapely, raven-haired woman. The party was one of Beatrice Weeks' first outings since her near-fatal illness and the death of husband five months before. She and Lugosi struck up a quick friendship and were constant companions for the remainder of *Dracula's* run in San Francisco and then Oakland. When Lugosi returned to Hollywood in late September, the two wrote and stayed in touch.

Their initial attraction may have been purely physical. Lugosi still commanded the striking good looks of his youth, and American women found his old world mien irresistible, if a bit affected. Weeks herself was a stunning beauty. History has played a cruel joke in that the only photograph of Beatrice Weeks ever seen today is singularly unflattering. In this photo, which appears in every Lugosi biography including the video documentary Bela Lugosi—The Forgotten King, she and



Lugosi seem to be comparing their large noses. As a good many photos in San Francisco newspapers testify, she was quite beautiful. Perhaps the woman with Lugosi in the famous photograph is not Weeks at all.

Though their first romance, if indeed one yet existed in 1928, was too brief to permit a mature relationship, the basis for one was certainly present. Both were in true need of companionship. The recent upheavals in their lives left them vulnerable, and each fit the other's needs – at least outwardly. Weeks' life of course was in turmoil. At 31 she was quite wealthy and beautiful, but quite alone. With her lung condition she now lived with the lingering possibility of early death. That question must have haunted her through 1928 and 1929 and the successive deaths of her husband and father. Now to her came a worldly foreigner who had survived several close brushes with death and was famous as a role as lord of the undead. Goadby Mills, Charles Weeks and now Bela Lugosi all were in their mid-40s when they met Beatrice; all were well-known in their professional and social circles; all three can be surmised to have been men of strong and dominant personalities. No photograph of Mills has been located, but both Charles Weeks and Lugosi can be described as stately rather than warm. These similarities beg the question – was Beatrice marrying the same man time and again? Was her father – Harvard lawyer, naval officer and Washington bureaucrat – the prototype for Beatrice's three husbands?

Much the same can be said of Lugosi. Beneath the confident, self-assured exterior must have lurked a man overwhelmed by his new surroundings. He no doubt hoped to pool *Dracula* into a film career, but the advent of sound films stalled his progress. The thick Lugosi accent and the crude sound equipment were simply not ready for each other. Nevertheless, shortly after his arrival in Los Angeles in June 1928, he was whisked off to a screen test with Gloria Swanson. He did not get the part, not due to his English, but because unlike most actors in Hollywood claiming to be over 6 feet tall, Lugosi actually was. Swanson disappeared when next to him. Surely, by the time he first met Weeks, he had learned that Hollywood – like the Russian front, post-war Europe, an Italian freighter and New York – was yet another jungle with its own laws of survival. And another creeping notion was worrying him: in 1928, two years before filming *Dracula*, he was already complaining that American acting relied too much on type-casting and that he was playing the same type of role too often.

And, just as Beatrice may have seen in Lugosi what she unconsciously sought in a mate, so Lugosi may have hoped to find his past in her. When he fled Hungary's Royalist reign of terror in 1919, his young sheltered wife Ilona Szmik did not follow. Both the Cremer and Lennig Lugosi biographies testify that he loved his young bride very much. The suggestive evidence that he never forgot her, that he was haunted by that loss, is considerable. In speaking of life in Hungary to interviewers, Lugosi would sometimes indulge in the most incredible fantasies. He told of an encounter with a female vampire; he once conjured up the famous story of Hedy the Cat Woman; he claimed he deserted not only a wife but also sons in Hungary. For two decades he whimsically doles out variations of these tales to eager journalists and publicists. The one consistent element in all of them is the Woman in Hungary.

In America, Lugosi's wives would be either very young, very Hungarian or both. His second wife and his second Ilona, Ilona von Montag, was Hungarian. After their brief marriage ended, Ilona II sailed for Hungary and never returned.

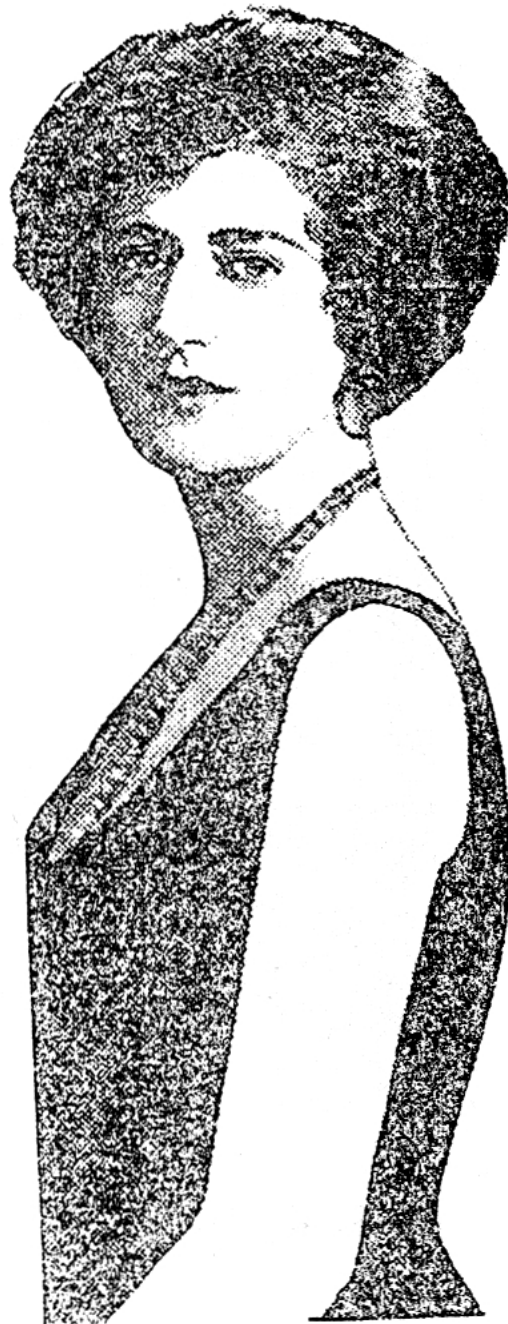
Beatrice, his third, was his junior by 15 years; Hope Lininger, his fifth, by 32. His fourth and only marriage of any duration was to Lillian Arch, 30 years younger and a second generation Hungarian-American. The reason he married her, Lillian told Robert Cremer, was "I was a person he could mold to his complete satisfaction."

Lugosi's memory of his first Ilona crept into at least one of his film roles. *The Black Cat* of 1934 offered Lugosi the only role which he himself helped design. Lennig relates that Vitus Verdegast was only a small part until Lugosi talked director Edgar G. Ulmer into expanding it. In the film, Verdegast returns to Hungary after 15 years in prison to find his lost wife unchanged – dead and encased in glass. His daughter, her mother's image, is killed before Verdegast can reach her. He weeps over her body before taking his revenge. Verdegast's plight is a grotesque and morbid distortion of Lugosi's own. This incredible film is almost a dark biography of the actor – the lost love in Hungary, the upheaval of war, 15 years of exile, and the evil new world personified by Boris Karloff. If *The Raven* is Lugosi's self parody, *The Black Cat* is his self tragedy. Reclaiming a young, unspoiled love is a common male fantasy, and a familiar element in horror plots. The fantasy dogged Lugosi, most clearly in *The Raven*, *The Corpse Vanishes*, *The Invisible Ghost*, *Voodoo Man*, and his soliloquy in *Bride Of The Monster*. Of course to suggest that this theme was intentional in any films other than *The Black Cat* and *Bride Of The Monster* is absurd. But the list contains his most personal performance, his most passionate, the best of his poverty row films and his only sustained improvisation on film.

In Beatrice, Lugosi might well have seen a clear reflection of Ilona. Both came from social classes above his. Despite their financial means, both were dependent women in need of a strong man. When he last saw Ilona and when he first met Beatrice, a distinct air of tragedy hovered over them.

According to interviews Lugosi gave when they married, he and Weeks did correspond after parting in October 1928. Lugosi was then probably unable to write effectively in English, and Beatrice's competence in languages no doubt served the romance well. The news they related in these letters, none of which are known to survive, could not have been very cheerful. Beatrice lost her father; and Lugosi's career went nowhere. His only film role of note was in *The 13th Chair*. He gave a fine performance, but as always he was no match for Tod Browning's lethargic direction, and the film was a resounding box-office failure. In the summer of 1929 a west coast touring company of *Dracula* was formed and Lugosi begrudgingly accepted the lead. The production opened in Los Angeles to very poor reviews, not surprising since it lacked the polish of the Broadway production that had come to Los Angeles only a year before. The play then toured the Pacific Northwest without Lugosi, who remained in Hollywood for some film work. In July Lugosi rejoined the company in San Francisco. He and Weeks were united for the second and last time.

*Dracula* reopened at the Columbia Theatre on July 22, 1929. Beatrice and Lugosi wed five days later in Redwood City, a nearby suburb, and separated approximately August 1. Exactly what occurred in these 10 days is nowhere accurately recorded. A notice appeared in the July 24 *San Francisco Chronicle*, three days before the wedding, announcing the impending event. Therefore, the marriage was not quite the spur-of-the-moment affair as it has been often described. According to the *Chronicle*, after meeting again "both decided nothing but marriage could make them



happy." The couple and a few of the bride's friends went to Redwood City on the morning of the 27th and returned in time for a matinee performance of *Dracula*.

At the Columbia a reporter from the *San Francisco Examiner* caught up with Lugosi. The actor, joking about the impossibility of hiding from the American press, was in rare form:

*Examiner:* "Is she a blonde or a brunette?"

Lugosi: "Oooooooooo, I do not know."

*Examiner:* "You do not know."

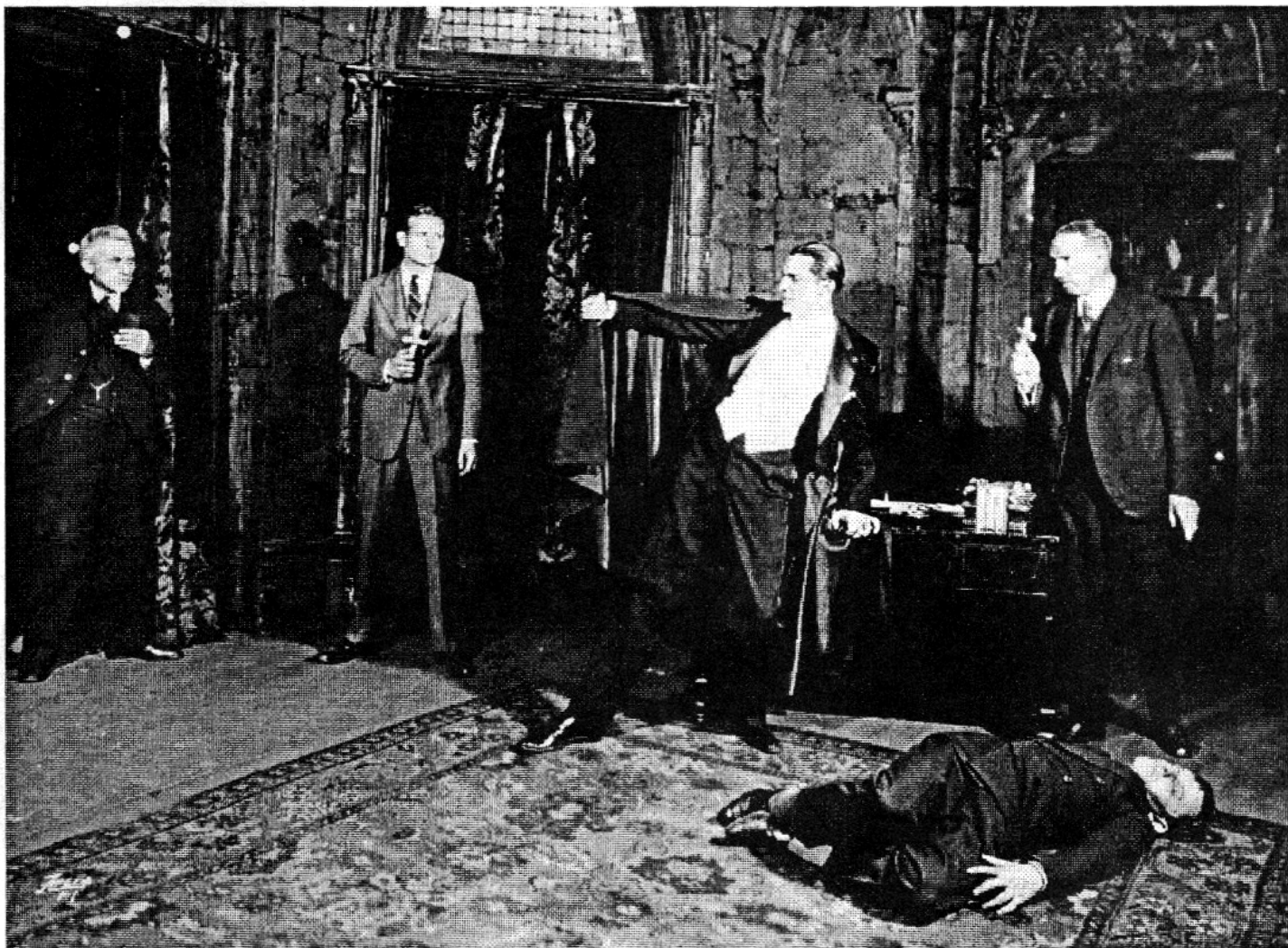
Lugosi: "No. You see, it is like this. The eyes got in the way. You understand."

The interview ended with a remark by Lugosi quite out of context. It must have sent shivers through Beatrice Lugosi when she read it:

"Marriage and a career? Ho, the Hungarians believe that the man should take care of the woman. Her divine profession is motherhood."

The remark, of course, signaled Lugosi's unflinching transition from a passionate lover to a tyrannical husband. In marriage Lugosi's male-centered





Lugosi on Broadway in the stage production of *Dracula*, circa 1929.

Hungarian upbringing combined with his personal quirks. The result was unfounded jealousy and imperial domination. Lugosi's wives either submitted to, or at least subverted, his will or left.

Two accounts of the four days Weeks and Lugosi lived as wife and husband have reached print. The accuracy of both can be questioned. The first is an article by George Carpozi, Jr. which appeared in the November 1973 *Motion Picture*. Carpozi quotes Beatrice describing Lugosi's boorish behavior:

"He slapped me in the face because I ate a lamb chop, which he had hidden in the icebox for his after-theater, midnight lunch. 'If you want lamb chops - buy your own,' my husband said...His table manners were terrible. He would break an apple in half and crowd one of the portions in his mouth, unable to speak or to swallow until he had chewed it up fine. And he constantly used his fingers in place of a fork and was addicted to similar habits that simply frayed my nerves."

As Lugosi's view of marriage Beatrice is again quoted:

"He told me that he was King, that in Hungary a wife and all she possessed were placed at the husband's disposal, that, in effect, I was nothing but a servant. I objected to this, and we quarreled."

The source of these quotes is not referenced. Carpozi has written magazine articles and paperbacks about public figures, particularly Prohibition Era gangsters. One of his better works is a biography of Bugsy Siegel, which includes quoted

conversations between Siegel and his mistress Virginia Hill. These conversations are best described as extremely intimate. Again, Carpozi cites no references, but does state in his introduction that he relies on information sources which must be kept confidential. Without some supporting documentation, the Weeks' quotes, like the Siegel-Hill conversations, must be assumed sheer fabrications. However, in his article, Carpozi shows clear knowledge of several obscure facts about Weeks and the marriage. While the quotes themselves are questionable, they may be founded on kernels of truth.

A more credible source is Robert Cremer's *Lugosi: The Man Behind The Cape*, which describes four days of drinking, partying, hangovers and bickering. Beatrice emerges as a Roaring '20s socialite, living only for fun and only by liquor; Lugosi as a husband expecting a wife to cater to his mornings after and not vice versa. While Cremer's account may represent the setting of their brief marriage, it lacks the insight that characterizes most of his book and is shallow on the key facts. Cremer apparently knows nothing of the prior meeting in 1928 or of Weeks' background.

Whether Cremer is quoting Lillian Lugosi or the Hungarian language newspaper, *California Magyarsag*, his ultimate source is Lugosi himself. Certainly to his Hungarian friends and particularly his next wife, Lugosi would tend to portray the Weeks marriage as a 4-day fling and mistake, rather than a year-long infatuation and fantasy. Cremer's account is valuable in that it relates how Lugosi chose to recall the marriage - a marriage doomed by the realization that they were not the

persons they imagined themselves or each other to be.

The breakup came quickly. On December 9, 1929 Beatrice testified at a divorce hearing in Reno that her husband was "sullen and morose and inhospitable to their guests...temperamental to the extreme...and had a violent temper." The final decree, on the grounds of incompatibility, was handed down the same day. *The Associated Press* picked up the story, but outside of San Francisco it was hardly carried. *The Chronicle* gave the divorce front page coverage with the headline, "Wife of *Dracula* Star Says Role Carried Too Far." Lugosi later claimed that Beatrice sought reconciliation and that he nobly refused to exploit her for her money. His sensitivity to her wealth harkens back to his earlier dependence on Ilona's family for financial support. He might have been telling the truth, for he was soon on the ascent and Beatrice was spiraling to self-destruction.

Lugosi was to be her last love. Pulmonary disease had numbered her days, and there are the nagging rumors of heavy drinking. After 1929, her conditions worsened. She soon left San Francisco, ostensibly for a climate conducive to her delicate health. Eventually she settled in Colon, Panama, hardly reputed as a health spa. How she wound up in such a place can only be conjectured. A clue comes from Polly Adler's autobiography, *A House Is Not A Home*. She calls Colon, "the last port of call, the bottom of the barrel." Beatrice Weeks died there in May 1931 at age 34. Three months before, the film *Dracula* had premiered, and Bela Lugosi was now world famous. ■



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**QUICK TURN OVER (1969 • color)** A group of swingers start out with mild experimentation, but the sex turns real bizarre real quick!

**ROOM AND BROAD (1967 • b&w)** For some, the price of room & broad can be very high! A perfect Times Square low-life sex flick.

### THE MARRIAGE DROPOUTS (1969 • b&w)

4 guys flashback on the sleazy (& goofy) reasons why their marriages failed.

### THE BED... AND HOW TO MAKE IT! (1966 • b&w)

The sexual intrigue runs rampant when some perverts and their victims cross paths at a wild motel. Stand-out sexploitation from JOE SARNO.

**SEX CIRCUS (1969 • b&w)** This aptly-titled slime-fest won't let up (or let you down)! Some funny & truly sick twists on the usual pervo fare.

**ONCE OVER NIGHTLY (1968 • color)** A peek into Dr. Dan's medical practice reveals a catalog of carnality. Directed by ANDREA TRUE.

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We're treated to a twisted tour de force as a prostitute reveals her past to a psychiatrist.

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As her life spirals out of control, Inger stops at nothing in her search for thrills!

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**THE PROCURER (1968 • b&w)** Wilson operated his own "school of love" where he treated the graduates cheap, but sold them expensive!

**THIGH SPY (1967 • b&w)** The murder runs cold & the lust runs hot when an artist becomes involved with some ruthless secret agents.

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### SURFSIDE SEX (1967 • b&w)

Disenchanted youth, LSD & wild sex in a flick that could've been titled "Sleazy Rider!"

### NYMPHO (1967 • b&w)

You won't say "No" to this sleaze-fest about a gal who could only say "Yes!"

**FOUR ON THE FLOOR (1968 • b&w)** Priscilla experiences a sexual wake-up call when she partakes in some very weird party games.

### AFTER THE BALL WAS OVER (1969 • b&w)

Life among the beautiful people turns ugly for a wealthy playgirl on the prowl.

### THE THREE SEXATEERS (1969 • b&w)

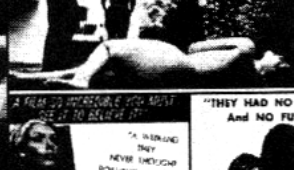
These adventurous love dolls came, saw, and conquered—but not necessarily in that order!

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### SATAN'S BED



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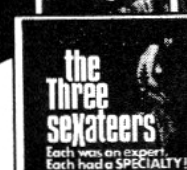
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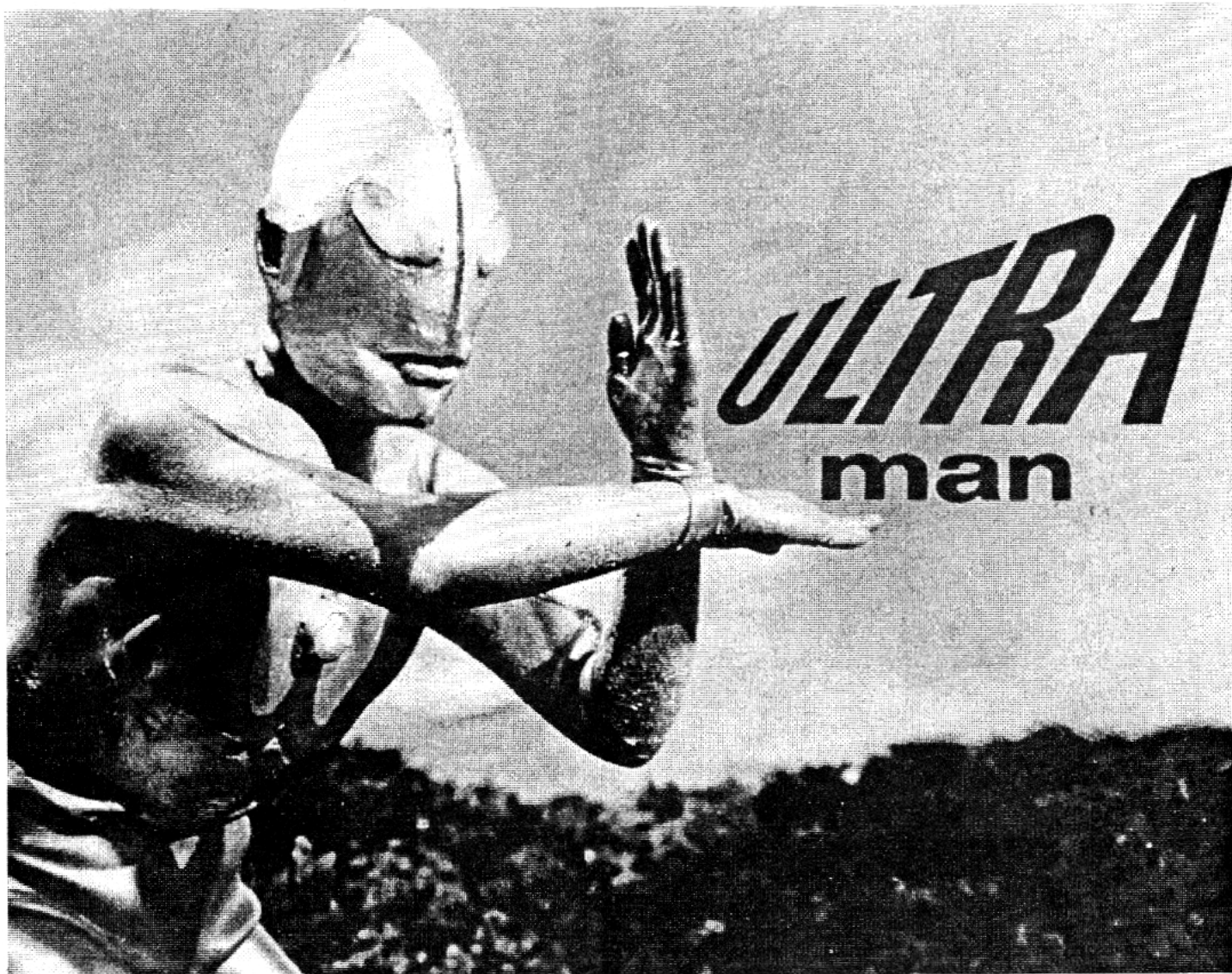
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CULT MOVIES





## by John Marshall

Those of us who grew up in the Seventies never realized how lucky we were. In a lot of ways, it seems like we missed out on much of the classic TV that our "baby boom" brethren had enjoyed. We never saw *Star Trek*, or *Batman*, or *Man From U.N.C.L.E.* when they first aired. The earliest thing I remember seeing that wasn't a rerun was the 1969 moon landing.

But man, in our day, we still had some great TV shows to watch. When I look at what kids have had to sit through in the last fifteen years, I realize just how lucky we were. These days, the only afternoon "straight" adventure show worth watching is *Batman: The Animated Series*. But that just came on in 1992. There were a good 12 or 13 years before that when there was nothing good to watch at all!

When I was a kid, watching Philadelphia-area TV stations in the afternoons, there was plenty to watch. Channel 17 had an afternoon host named Wee Willie Webber, who appeared in between shows with his "Peanut Gallery." I'm not exactly sure what it was he did, or why, but I do remember he would introduce each show as it came on. There were plenty of animated adventure shows, all fairly interesting. There was *Marine Boy*, and *Eighth Man*, and of course *Speed Racer*. But for me, *Speed Racer* was merely something to sit through while waiting for *Ultraman* to come on.

As a kid, I had no idea that *Ultraman* was a phenomenon in Japan and many other countries around the world. I had no idea it had spawned eight sequel series, one of which (*Ultra Seven*) is reportedly even better than the original. I had no idea that Eiichi Tsuburaya, the special effects genius behind *Godzilla* and other monsters from Toho Studios, was the mastermind behind the show. All

I knew was that it was an awesome adventure show, that packed all the action from a Japanese monster movie into a half hour, five days a week!

*Ultraman* was not the first regular adventure show to feature a Japanese superhero, or for that matter, monsters. The first program to feature giant monsters on a weekly basis was Tsuburaya's outstanding series *Ultra Q*. (The "Q" stood for "Questions," in other words, mysteries for the heroes to solve.) *Ultra Q* was a cross between *The Outer Limits* and the *Twilight Zone*, with the added bonus of giant Japanese monsters. It was outstanding, and incredibly varied in subject matter from episode to episode. *Ultra Q* starred Kenji Sahara, who had starred in *Rodan* and appeared in many Toho features. It co-starred a young actress named Hiroko Sakurai, as a photographer named Yuriko. The following year, she was to appear in *Ultraman* as Fuji, the female Science Patrol member. *Ultra Q* was very popular, but plans were under way for a program that would be even more exciting.

To promote the premier of the new show, *Ultraman*, there was a gala stage show presentation in Japan. Hundreds of Japanese kids and their patient parents crammed into a Tokyo theater to watch a stage play. The play dealt with a mad scientist, creating monsters. The actual monster costumes from many *Ultra Q* and upcoming *Ultraman* episodes were worn by stuntmen on the stage. The TV cast of the Science Patrol, and Ultraman himself, appeared on stage as well. (Human-sized, of course!) The creation, planning and execution of the 39 original episodes of *Ultraman* was later chronicled in a book, which was made into a TV special in the late 1980s called *The Men who Made Ultraman*.

Ultraman is a robotic-looking alien from Nebula M-78.

We are never told if what we are looking at is Ultraman himself, or a protective suit he wears, although in the almost 30 year history of *Ultra* series nobody ever takes the suit off! Most fans assume he is some kind of metallic life form, just based on different minerals than humans are. Of course, kids just use standard Kid Logic. Hey, he's just Ultraman, that's all, and that's what he looks like! He is assisted in his battles by the Science Patrol, Earth's defense and investigation unit, with bases across the world. The Japanese members are Captain Mura (Shoji Kobayashi), a stern leader with a sense of humor; Ito (Masaya Nikame), a socially inept but brilliant inventor, Arashi (Mitao Dokumimashi), a simple man with a dead aim with any kind of weapon, Fuji (Hiroko Sakurai), an independent female member, no bad for mid-Sixties Japan, and Hayata (Susumu Kurobe), an aloof and agile man of action. It is a true credit to the series that, despite being translated and dubbed, the characters continue to be individual personalities.

Let's take a look at this wonderful show. What follows is a guide to all 39 episodes. It shows the many dramatic aspects of the *Ultraman* show, and demonstrates that a simple monster show can have comedy and tragedy, action and pathos. I've added titles of my own for easier reader recollection. They are followed in parentheses by the more oblique original Japanese episode titles. And now, let's fly up into the Ultra-Realm. Ready? Get set! SHOOWATCH!

1. *Hero From The Stars* (The First Ultra Operation): Hayata, a member of the Science Patrol, is on a routine mission when his ship collides with Ultraman's spaceship. Ultraman explains to Hayata that he was escorting



the radioactive monster Bemlar through space, when its containment vessel broke free and entered Earth's atmosphere. Because the crash has fatally wounded Hayata, Ultraman shares his life essence with him. Hayata is given the Beta Capsule, a device that transforms him into Ultraman in times of crisis. Bemlar (Bemular in Japan) appears, and Hayata changes to Ultraman and destroys him. Ultraman will remain on Earth, as Hayata's alter-ego.

2. *Attack Of The Baltans* (Shoot The Invaders): The space research center is invaded by the grasshopper-like Baltans, an alien race stranded on Earth. The Baltans decide they like it here. Unfortunately, there are 60,800,000,000 of them, and so humanity must go. The Baltans proved incredibly popular, and have become long-standing Ultra Foes. They have appeared in *Return Of Ultraman*, *Ultraman 80*, the animated *Ultraman* series, and various other places. In an unusual move, Ito gets a black eye and narrates the episode, speaking directly to the camera. The beauty of *Ultraman* is, they tried almost everything at various times, and whatever it was worked well!

3. *The Invisible Monster* (The Science Patrol In Action): Naronga is a legendary creature that drains electricity from power stations to remain invisible. Fuji's young brother Hoshino (Akihide Tsua) attempts to take out the beast with Arashi's ray gun, but winds up in trouble. The Naronga costume is partially constructed from Baragon, the monster from Toho's film *Frankenstein Conquers The World*.

4. *Rage On The Seaside* (Five Seconds To The Explosion): Ragon, an amphibious humanoid first seen in *Ultra Q*, has been driven mad and grown to giant size from the effects of H-Bombs. What's worse, he has an unexploded H-Bomb attached to his scaly skin and is headed for a Japanese seaside resort area! Ragon's bloodcurdling screams were replaced in the English dub with Naronga's more standardized roar.

5. *Miloganda, Peril Plant!* (The Secret Of Miroganda): A botanist is cultivating the weird Miloganda plant, but it escapes and starts feeding on humans! Several famous faces from Toho's movies appear throughout the series, and this episode is an early example. I won't spoil any surprises, you can spot them yourself!

6. *The Chocolate Eater And The Smuggler* (Operation Coast Guard): Guezra is a South American lizard that has somehow become a giant, and is attacking Tokyo Harbor. Why? Well guezra lizards eat the insects that nest in cocoa plants, which is why you can eat chocolate so clean. (Bet you didn't know that.) Anyway, the giant Guezra is attacking ships and warehouses looking for cocoa beans. Complicating matters is that the notorious smuggler Diamond Kick has some stolen diamonds hidden in a cocoa sack! The Guezra costume is a revamped version of the monster Pita from *Ultra Q*.

7. *The Lost City* (The Blue Stone Of Bahradi): A mysterious magnetic force is downing planes in Arabia. The Science Patrol investigates and discovers a lost city, whose inhabitants worship a statue of Ultra (Ultraman). They also find Antlar, a giant beetle with magnetic powers, delivered to Earth centuries ago by a meteor! This is the first of three times during the series that the Science Patrol, no Ultraman, destroys the main monster. Interestingly though, in the 1980s compilations movie *Ultraman Zoffy*, the fight scene is edited to look as if Ultraman is killing Antlar, because that movie does not contain any footage of human characters!

8. *The Island Of Monsters* (The Lawless Zone Of Monsters): A scientific expedition is investigating a mysterious island, and communication is cut off. When the Science Patrol investigates, they find the island is overrun by prehistoric monsters, including the burrowing Maguda, the bat-like Chandorrah, and the tyrant king of all monsters, Red King! Fortunately, one scientist has been kept alive by a small, friendly monster, (played by the Garamon costume from *Ultra Q*), and he is rescued. Red King destroys Chandorrah (actually, *Ultra Q*'s Pegila making a guest appearance). Captain Mura and Hayata kill Maguda with grenades ("It's like visiting a monster zoo!" says Hayata). Red King is beaten by Ultraman, who slams him onto the ground, apparently killing him. Red King, with his tiny head, ribbed body and ferocious attitude, has gone on to become one of the great Ultraman



**Ultraman spawned eight sequel series, one of which (*Ultra Seven*) is reportedly even better than the original.**

monsters, and my personal favorite Japanese monster. He returned in *Ultraman 80*, when some school children are arguing about who the original Ultraman's greatest foe was, and a magician overhears them, bringing Red King back to life.

9. *Who Wants To Climb With Me Today?* (Operation Greased Lightning): Gabora, a legendary monster, is freed from his underground tomb by a combination of road construction and heavy rainfall. Efforts to destroy him are hampered by a bunch of mountain-climbing boys who need rescuing. Gabora has an interesting bony shield over his face, which opens like a flower. Like Naronga before him, Gabora is also made from an old Baragon costume.

10. *The Legend Of The Lake* (Dinosaur Base Mystery): A scientist thought dead for years has been growing his own monster, Keyra, in a secluded lake. Keyra (Jirass in Japan) is played by guest star Godzilla, wearing a frilled collar and gold paint. The battle between Ultraman and Keyra is an odd mix of slapstick and gory violence, and the scene where Ultraman tears off Keyra's collar is often cut from TV prints, which causes some confusion!

11. *The Wishing Stone* (The Rogue and The Magic Stone From Space): Hoshino finds a small meteorite that becomes anything it is wished to be. An unscrupulous man steals it and creates a servant monster, Gyango. The poor creature is not so much evil as too big for its own good. It is not destroyed, but eventually wished back as a stone. This episode is pretty much a comedy, and has some hilarious scenes, mostly involving Gyango appearing

around the hotel where the villain is staying.

12. *The Mummy And The Dragon* (Cries Of The Mummy): Scientists doing an excavation find a weird mummy and take it back to the science center for study. It comes back to life, stalking the city, and murdering people in several spooky, shadowy scenes. When it is eventually shot down, a Chinese dragon-type monster, Dodongo, appears to wreak vengeance.

13. *The Refinery Disaster* (Petroleum S.O.S.): Oil carriers are being sunk around coastal Japan. The Science Patrol discovers Pesta, a strange, batlike monster with two giant stomachs, that is consuming oil. Ito attacks it against Captain Mura's orders, then must deal with the tragedy as the creature heads inland to destroy a refinery. The episode is unique in that the monster collapses from smoke inhalation and does not actually battle Ultraman, who is busy putting out the fire.

14. *The Pearl Lover* (Operation Pearl Oyster): Gamakujira is a big, fat, goofy platypus that eats pearls, much to the chagrin of Fuji. Pearls are her birthstone, you see. This episode is played largely as a comedy. Gamakujira (Kujira means "whale" in Japanese) is an interesting creature in that he never really hurts anybody, he just eats pearls. Fuji gets some teasing when she begs Gamakujira to save her at least one pearl. "You do not understand a woman's emotions!" she replies. Although she's the target of humor in this episode, Fuji is shown throughout the series as a competent Science Patrol member. She consistently bears up well against the prejudices and tauntings of the

(continued)



other members. Bearing in mind that this show was made in 1966, and in Japan, that's pretty notable.

15. *The Children's Monster* (The Cosmic Wave Of Horror): A group of children draw a tadpole-like monster on the side of a section of pipe at a pipe yard. Cosmic rays make it live, but only during the day. The kids redraw the monster, Gabadon, to make it more ferocious. That's when Ultraman is needed! This episode has the best last scene in the series.

16. *The Baltan Invasion* (The Science Patrol In Space): After several episodes featuring fairly benign monsters, Ultraman's greatest foes are back. The Baltans hijack a rocket and distract the Science Patrol, while the bulk of their forces spread terror on Earth. With Arashi, Hayata, and Captain Mura trapped on a desolate asteroid, can Ito and Fuji stop the Baltans alone?

17. *The Fifth Dimensional Fear* (Passport To Infinity): Famous explorer Sir Yesterday and his colleague Mister Fouqui discover two space rocks, one red, one blue. Each has the ability to affect reality and causes mysterious things to happen. Reality reverts, inverts, and subverts as the Science Patrol attempt to deal with the menace. Finally, the rocks combine to form Bullton, a strange, meteor-like creature. One of the wildest episodes, this was the basis for a section of the *Ultraman* video game, featuring Bullton bouncing, rolling, and performing its many tricks. (The Japanese version of the game, that is.)

18. *Brother From Another World*: The original Japanese title is perfect! Why mess with a title like that? Zarab, a mysterious alien, arrives on Earth the same time as a poisonous fog. Dispersing the fog, he is hailed as a hero and the United Nations is thrilled with him. The suspicious Science Patrol members are scorned, and Ultraman appears to be destroying Japan! This is one of the few poor episodes. It's hard to believe that nobody realized Zarab was the cause of the killer fog, especially considering Earth's past problems with aliens. Also, when an alien tells you that his planet's name is Murder, you really ought to be a little wary of him, my brothers. Uhr uhr uhr uhr!

19. *The Time Capsule* (Devils Come Again): A time capsule is discovered at a construction sight. After several delays, it is revealed to contain the monster Arbira (Banila in Japan) who goes on the rampage. However, a second capsule brings forth the even more powerful Aboras. (The Aboras costume was made by placing a new head on a Red King suit and repainting it. Also, Naronga's roar was used for Aboras.)

20. *The Highway Spirit* (Route 87 Of Terror): The ghost of a young boy killed in a traffic accident summons legendary monster Hydra to avenge him. This theme was used to greater effect in a *Space Giants* story made about the same time, as well as a *Spectreman* story a few years later. The Hydra monster is based on a real statue in a Japanese park, which is also seen in the episode. A similar story was done for the Australian *Ultraman* show, which proved even denser and more pointless than most of the other episodes of that series.

21. *Kemular, Volcano Beast* (Beneath The Smoking Volcano): The monster Kemular inhabits a volcano and emits a poisonous smoke. He is a walking armory, with a tail that emits an electric blast and wings that act like shields. Ultraman relies on one of Ito's inventions to help kill the creature. This is the second time in the series that the main monster is actually killed by the Science Patrol.

22. *The Underground Invaders* (Underground Maneuver): The mysterious Ann Moheim, a member of the Paris Science Patrol, has been replaced by a spy from an underground civilization. They kidnap Hayata, hoping to brainwash Ultraman into helping them conquer the surface world. Also, the invaders send their monster Teresudon to attack Japan.

23. *Jamila* (Earth Sweet Home): An astronaut named Jamila returns from space, long thought dead. Unfortunately, he is now deformed beyond all recognition and has become a tragic, but murderous monster. Thanks to Ultraman, he finally finds peace. This episode features some outstanding photography, proving yet again that this was more than just another kiddie show to the talented people who made it.

24. *Drill Fish!* (The Submarine Lab): In a wacky disaster story, a giant fish (Gubira) sabotages an underground facility on its opening day, trapping Captain Mura, an administrator, and the little girl who is the "lucky" recipient of an exclusive tour. Fuji gets to save the day by performing an underwater rescue.

25. *Death Comet* (Typhoon The Weird Comet): A comet threatens to strike the Earth, and the Science Patrol is helpless to stop it. Fortunately, it barely misses us. Unfortunately, it triggers a series of disastrous events. A hydrogen bomb is lost and winds up swallowed by none other than Red King, who was only wounded in his last battle with Ultraman. The comet also unleashes a flying monster, Dorako, and its passing awakens a giant snow ape (Gigass) to boot! The second half of the episode is a wrestling match between the three monsters, as Ultraman and the Science Patrol attempt to separate the hydrogen bomb from Red King. This Red King is a new costume, since the previous one was worn out from playing Red King and later, Aboras. Ultraman finally settles for separating Red King's head from his body and detonating the bomb in space. But you can't keep a good Red King down. In the 1979 animated *Ultraman* series, the Monster Island episode was reshaped with Red King, Aboras, Banila, and several other monsters.

26. *Gohora pt. 1* (Prince Monster): In a two-part episode, the prehistoric Gohora is found on the island of Port Gohora. Quite a coincidence, huh? An attempt to bring him back to Japan for study goes amiss, and the creature roams the countryside. Ultraman battles Gohora, but the creature proves his match and escapes! Look for a production drawing of Aboras when a young boy fantasizes about his creation, King Creature. This episode is unusual in that, judging by some of the dialogue, the characters have never seen a monster before!

27. *Gohora pt. 2* (Prince Monster): A young boy has found the Beta Capsule, and eventually gets it back to Hayata. Gohora (Gomora in Japan) causes plenty of damage before finally being killed Ultraman. Gohora is another Hall Of Fame monster, and was also revived for Ultraman 80. He also was the head monster in the film *Six Ultra Brothers versus The Monster Army*, which you may have seen redubbed in English (with added scenes from other *Ultra* shows) as *Space Warriors 2000*. In English or Japanese, the film is a waste of time even for the four-year-olds it was made for. It has nothing on *Ultraman*, which is a show that can be enjoyed by all ages.

28. *The Dada Invasion* (Human Specimen): The alien Dada have taken over an observatory, trapping Captain Mura and a young woman. Ultraman's efforts to stop them are hampered by their seemingly limitless control over their physical bodies, and his, too! A pretty wild episode in which Ultraman gets shrunk. (No! I said "shrunk!")

29. *Gold Mine* (The Underground Challenge): Goldon, a strange prehistoric creature, is causing trouble by tunneling through gold mines. A greedy miner gets in the way as the Science Patrol uses their drill tank to attack the creature.

30. *Snowgirl, Ooh!* (The Legend Of Snowy Mountain): A ski resort is plagued by reports that an Abominable Snowman is terrorizing hunters and vacationers. The blame is placed on the Snow Girl, who lives in the forest and is friends with the creature, Oo (Woo in Japanese). After battling Ultraman, Oo vanishes at the end. He later returned to face Ultraman Ace.

31. *The Plant People* (Who Has Come?): A mysterious visitor is actually Keronia, an evil agent of a group plant people. As Keronia learns the Science Patrol's weaknesses, his people head for Japan from "across the sea" to invade.

32. *Firestorm* (The Endless Revenge): Hayata is keen on Patra, a visiting member of India's Science Patrol. But his attempts to pitch some woo are interrupted by Zambolar, a creature that causes fire everywhere he goes.

33. *Mefilas Invades* (The Forbidden Word): Ultraman meets his most powerful foe, the alien Mefilas, who threatens to revive the Baltans, Zarob, and Kemur (from *Ultra Q*) and take over the Earth. Battling Ultraman to a standstill, Mefilas warns that Ultraman may have his way now, but he will return another day. And he did, to battle

Ultraman Taro!

34. *Gift From The Sky*: Another title too good to mess with. This episode is all about things that fall to the ground, from snowflakes to monsters. In a classic comedy episode, Earth receives a gift from the sky. Skydon is a stupid monster that doesn't do much. Unfortunately he is too heavy to move. The Science Patrol tries rockets, a giant helicopter blade, and even more ridiculous measures to get rid of Skydon.

35. *The Homesick Monster* (Graveyard Of Monsters): On patrol in space, the Science Patrol spot the Ultra Zone, an area where some Ultra monsters are kept in a kind of suspended animation. One such creature, Seebozu, is snaggged by a passing rocket returning to Earth. All Seebozu wants is the peace and quiet of the Ultra Zone. Can humanity find a way to get him back, or must he be eliminated?

36. *Flashback* (Don't Shoot, Arashi!): A children's center is in the center of a target zone. The creature doing the targeting, Zaragas, is a huge black cyborg-beast with flash guns all over his body, sent by some evil aliens. Arashi is blinded, after disobeying Captain Mura's orders. Hayata is blinded, too. Can Ultraman battle a creature he can barely see? Of course. But can he win?

37. *Hail To The Chief* (A Tiny Hero): The series winds down with its final three episodes combining as a triple-climax, although they are three separate stories. A creature named Pigmon is found in a department store. The Science Patrol knows he's friendly. He resembles the friendly creature from the Island Of Monsters. Both of those resemble Garamon, a creature from *Ultra Q*, who was cute but not exactly docile. At any rate, Pigmon is desperately trying to warn humanity about something, so a scientist is called in to translate. Finally, the warning gets across: Geronimon, the Chief of all the monsters, is going to wage war on the Science Patrol, reviving sixty monsters who were defeated in the past. (Some of them must be from *Ultra Q*.) At any rate, he starts by reviving Teresudon (from *Underground Invaders*) and Dorako (from *Death Comet*), although in the dialogue they are referred to as Gabora and Red King! The Science Patrol defeats the creatures, once Ito stops whining that Ultraman does all Ito's work for him. Hayata reminds him that Ultraman needed the Science Patrol's help to defeat Antlar and Kemular. It's amazingly good continuity, especially considering those two monsters were never mentioned by name in their English-dubbed episodes. Neither was Red King, for that matter! Finally, Ultraman is needed – to defeat Geronimon. But it is Ito's weapon that does the monster in.

38. *Cordon Blues* (The Spaceship Rescue): Having defeated all the Earth's monsters and their leader Geronimon, the Science Patrol are called to assist a space station monitoring the planet Cordon. The space station staff have been blinded by something on the planet's surface. Investigating, the Science Patrol finds Keylla, an insectoid creature with flashing eyes, plus a second creature, Saigo, who tunnels through the planet's barren surface.

39. *Sayonara, Ultraman!*: Who can improve on a title like that? An alien invasion force head toward Earth, so enormous that it appears unstoppable. The leader of the aliens, Zeton, fells Ultraman with a secret weapon. Zeton is destroyed by Arashi, firing a new rocket weapon, while the rest of the patrol shoot down the spaceships. Ultraman, however, is critically injured. Another Ultraman, named Zoffy, comes to Earth, separates Hayata from his alter-ego, and leaves with Ultraman.

The, ahem, ultra-success of *Ultraman* guaranteed another season. But in Japan, instead of doing multiple seasons of a TV show, they carry on the style of a series with all-new characters. *Ultraman* continued for eight more "seasons" over a quarter-century, but with a different cast, and a different Ultraman, in each one. The finale of the original series had established that there were other Ultramen. A whole planet of them, in fact, and the Japanese viewing public would go on to meet an awful lot of them.

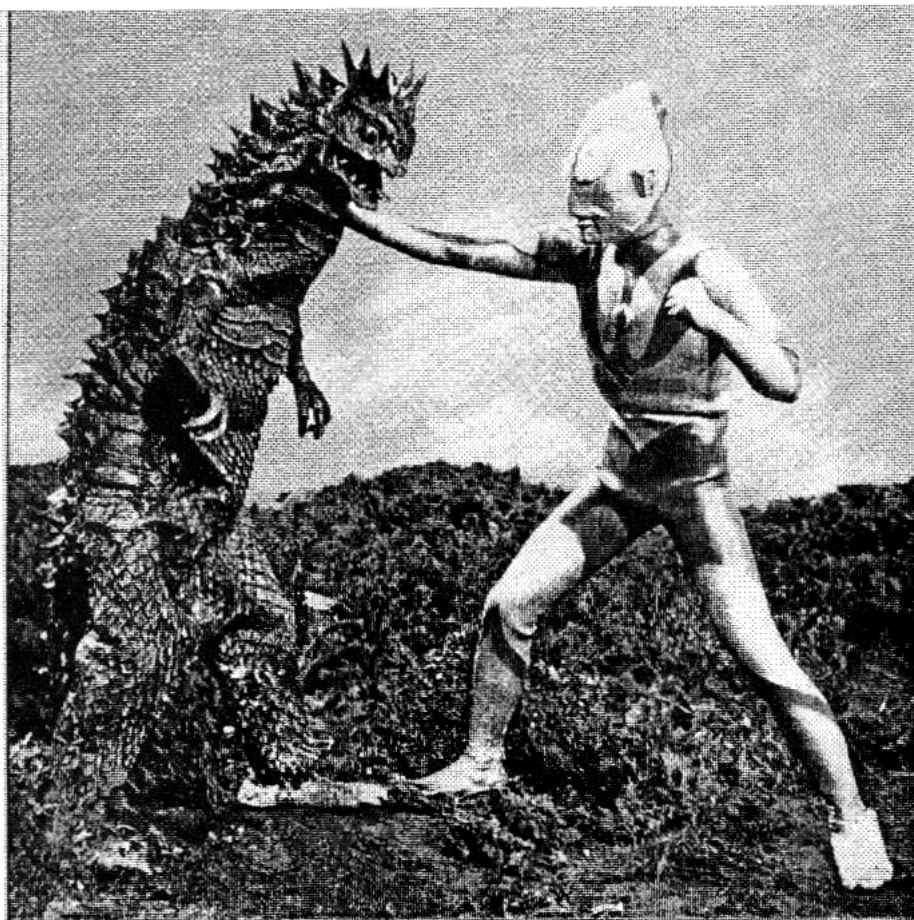
The first sequel series was *Ultra Seven*, in which an inhabitant of Nebula M-78 shares his identity with Dan Moroboshi of the Terrestrial Defense Force. This series is famous for its outstanding special effects and heavy drama, usually dealing with alien deceptions, rather than monsters on the loose. The actor who played Arashi in



*Ultraman* even returns as a new character, Furuhashi. It was apparently translated into English, but never screened nationwide. Then came *Return Of Ultraman*, which really featured a character who looked a lot like the original, but wasn't. Although it captured some of the flavor of the original series, the format was getting familiar, and it was joked up to make it fresh, and less effort was put into plotting and special effects. Even the actors playing the monsters started to behave like actors jumping around in monster costumes, rather than pretending to really be monsters. Eiji Tsubaraya died in 1969, so this series was finished by other people. That may explain the drop in quality.

Although *Return Of Ultraman* and its sequel series aren't bad, they don't have that originality or sincerity that was put into *Ultraman* and *Ultra Seven*. The rest of the series did have their moments, though. *Ultraman Ace* had the innovative concept of being linked to two humans, a man and a woman, who had to make contact in order to bring forth *Ultraman Ace*. *Ultraman Taro* was kind of a teenage *Ultraman*. *Ultraman Leo* was sort of an Ultra-Cousin who teamed up with an *Ultraman* named Astora. The character of Dan Moroboshi, who is also *Ultra Seven*, returned as leader of that series' particular Science Patrol. *Ultraman* also was given the animated treatment in 1979, with about the worst animation possible, not at all worthy of the character, although some famous Ultramonsters did show up. *Ultraman 80* was a return to live-action, featuring appearances by the Baltans, Red King, and Gohora. It promised to be a new direction for the series, not quite as silly as recent series had been, but it turned out to be pretty much more of the same. Ten years later, the Tsubaraya company attempted to break into the American market with *Ultraman: Towards The Future*. Although produced in Australia and having a serious tone and a large effects budget, the show tries too hard and ends up looking kind of stupid. It does feature character actor Ralph Cotterill and actress Gia Carides (*Strictly Ballroom*), to its credit.

Will *Ultraman* return? It's inevitable. The character is Japan's equivalent to Superman, and the merchandising proves it. *Ultraman*, his brothers, and top-line beasts like the Baltans and Red King find their way into calendars, model kits, action figure lines, trading cards, even spoons! Supposedly, a sequel series for the Australian *Ultraman* is being prepared. One thing is sure, with his 30th anniversary coming up, we'll be hearing from *Ultraman* again! ■



*Ultraman fights the latest in a long line of giant monsters.*



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Bernie Fine (left), Ray Dennis Steckler and John Andrews outside a pool room during the filming of *Body Fever* (1969). Fine was the producer of tv's *Hogan's Heroes* and acted in *Body Fever* as "Big Mac"

# John Andrews: Through My Eyes

A Cult Movies Exclusive by  
**Ray Dennis Steckler**

I first met John Andrews when I worked on a movie called *Frenzy* for Timothy Carey. It was later released as *The World's Greatest Sinner*. I still remember how John looked at that time, his hair slicked back, holding a clipboard, wearing blue jeans that were a little too short for him and a sweatshirt with the sleeves cut off. Even then he was always reciting lines from the movie *Casablanca*.

At our first meeting, I was astounded when he told me he was the son of Slim "Arkansas" Andrews, who was the sidekick of Tex Ritter in many movies, and that he was in fact the Godson of Tex Ritter. As a big fan of B westerns, I really enjoyed that. In those days, John worked as a grip, doing all kinds of odds and ends for Tim. He was always "up." Now John didn't take drugs but even then I think he had a few extra beers. He was always just a little buzzed. In fact, I don't think there was ever a day I knew him that he wasn't a little buzzed. He worked with Carey, myself and everyone else for around three weeks. I didn't see John for a long time after that. A really long time.

I met him again when I began working for Albert Zugsmith on a picture called *Sappho Darling*. I was hired Zugsmith to help him put the movie together. He put me under a somewhat interesting contract and said that if I stuck with him, I could be working for him for the rest of my life. It didn't sound like such a bad deal, except I



knew there was going to be a catch to it. We shot the picture in this house for three months and he put John in charge of the place as everything from a key grip to arranging the meals. Almost like a sort of a majordomo. Otherwise, John had no real understanding of the mechanics of movie making.

John was very loyal to Zuggy. He used to imitate Zugsmith. I just prayed that Zugsmith would never catch John doing these impressions. John was like a chameleon if you were around him long enough. I even caught him doing me, which broke me up. You really couldn't get mad at him. Anyway, he did fine at his job and I got to know him a lot better. Then Zugsmith and I had our falling out. If you didn't have a falling out with Zugsmith, then you didn't exist in Hollywood. I was just one of the blessed ones that got away from him. Zugsmith had a proven talent for putting together deals, creating projects, making movies. He was already sixty years old then and so paranoid he thought that everyone was against him. He was usually insulting to everyone so I left while John stayed. Oddly enough, Zugsmith seemed to get along with John better than anyone.

Then one day John appeared at my office at Sunset and Doheny. I was doing industrial films, documentaries and commercials and he wound up working for me. He did everything from moving equipment to cleaning the bathrooms. You just had to be able to put up with John because he never stopped talking. He never stopped doing his little stories, his lyrics, creating this make-believe show world he lived in.

During those years, John always had nice girlfriends and they were always African-Americans. White women simply did not interest him. He never drove, never owned a car, never had a phone. He walked everywhere, even to places miles away. He wore the same kind of clothes but he kept himself neat and clean. Still, he couldn't help but to annoy most people. I think he loved doing that. One day Mickey Rooney came with his son to see me about doing a project based on the Lemon Grove Kids and John called out, "HEY MICKEY! HEY ANDY HARDY! HEY MICKEY!" It was OK in the beginning, but he just never stopped. Pulsating. Pouncing away all the time. Constantly "on stage." He never stopped imitating people. You're on the set shooting and he's imitating someone. Kirk Douglas. Marlon Brando in the cab: "I coulda been somebody." He would do this all day long.

Stranger thing would happen. I was shooting a scene in an apartment on Sunset Boulevard one day for a motorcycle movie. John was working as my grip. I was crammed into a corner and couldn't move to get the shot I wanted. I thought out loud, "Gee, I wish this wall wasn't here so I could move the camera back a little." The next thing I know, John was smashing his hand right through the wall. "IS THAT WHAT YOU WANT, CHIEF?" (He dubbed me "chief," like Huntz Hall in the Bowery Boys.) Everyone in the cast and crew just stared at him. It didn't occur to him that there were people living in the apartment behind the wall he was breaking down with his bare hands.

Then we did *Body Fever*. He had a small part in it and then worked as a grip for the remainder. John never seemed to care that much about money. If you could pay him, fine. If you couldn't, that was OK too. He showed this great loyalty. As long as he had some money for a couple of beers, he was happy, but then he started getting into the whiskey. It started to show, but he was a good worker all through *Body Fever*. John also worked a little for me on *Sinithia The Devil's Doll*.

At the time of *Body Fever*, John was spending weekends with the great western screen star Ken Maynard, once one of the wealthiest men in Hol-

lywood. Maynard would give John a few bucks to pick up pint bottles of P.M. whiskey and they would get bombed. Ken was a recluse, having lost it all in the '30s after Nat Levine of Mascot Pictures replaced Maynard with Gene Autry for *Phantom Empire*. For whatever reason, Ken could relate to John. John was also friendly with B-western actor Lash LaRue. Through John, I first tried to get Lash, then Ken into *Body Fever* for a part, but it just never worked out. Besides the chance to actually work with these once popular stars, I wanted to spend some time with them. Looking back now, I find it strangely interesting that all of this was tied directly into John Andrews. I wonder if John saw himself in the mold of these long-unemployed stars to some degree. They had no one in their declining years and John was kind to them in their loneliness.

Shortly thereafter, I relocated to Las Vegas from LA and John helped us with the move. Six months later, I was driving along Tropicana Avenue in Vegas when I saw this figure, disheveled, in need of a shave, walking down the sidewalk. I immediately said to myself, "That's John Andrews." I headed back, pulled up to him and said, "John!" He turned around and said, "IT'S ABOUT TIME, OLLIE!" "Wha-?" was all I could say. "IT'S ABOUT TIME, OLLIE!" I've been here for three days. I knew you lived in Las Vegas somewhere!" According to him, he had been walking around town for *three days*, trying to remember where the house he had helped us move to was located.

At the time, I didn't have the funds to shoot any pictures and had opened a furniture store for steady income. Ron Haydock was working with me and he and John Andrews didn't get along at all. John though Ron didn't have any writing talent and Ron thought John was just a drunk. Each of them would ask me why I kept the other around. There was constant tension. John was always "on" and Ron was the exact opposite. He just wanted to be left alone. Give Ron Haydock a corner, a typewriter and a couple of cigarettes and he was happy.

When not selling furniture, I worked on getting a few film projects set up. There were a couple of con artists next door always trying to get people to invest in their schemes. One day one of them strolled into my place, like people who work in the same office block tend to do, and he made some very snide remark about my films. John heard this and said, "YA SHOULD'NA DONE THAT!" grabbing the man by his head and ripping a huge chunk of hair out of his scalp. "YA DON'T TALK ABOUT THE CHIEF LIKE THAT!" To this day, I still visualize this man's bloody hair hunk in John's hand. It was horrifying. Afraid of trouble, I asked John to get lost for a few days so the incident could cool off and be forgotten.

A week later, John came back to borrow some money for a bus back to LA. Apparently, he had walked over to a Strip hotel to see the Platters. However, they weren't the original Platters, only a re-creation, and John wound up actually jumping into the stage, announcing to the audience that "HEY, THESE AIN'T THE REAL PLATTERS!" They took him away and the Vegas police suggested that he get out of town and never come back. So John Andrews left Vegas. Just like that. Out of my life completely. For years.

Throughout the '70s I commuted between Vegas and LA regularly and I stayed at the old Vagabond Motel on Hollywood Boulevard. Every so often, John Andrews would see my car and we'd have breakfast or I'd do whatever I could to help him out. At one point he had picked up a stray dog and he seemed to be taking care of this little dog. He would always have a bottle of booze on him, but he never begged. I could never find out exactly what he was doing or how he lived, but

from what I could gather he was just floating from one person's house to another. Whenever I connected with him, I would buy him a meal, even though he never appeared to be especially hungry at the table. Through him I met Eric Caidin at his movie memorabilia store and John seemed proud at having made the introduction.

Several times I'd gotten him some jobs and I wound up losing those acquaintances because I had recommended John to them. He would consistently get into violent arguments with people and get out of control. Now I don't remember John ever hitting anybody (except for the bloody hair hunk incident) but you didn't want to take a chance on getting John Andrews mad. He possessed this menacing presence and was as strong as an ox although he never threatened me personally. In fact, he was extremely loyal to me. At a much earlier time when he was basically just an annoyance to people, I brought him along to help me as a grip on other people's projects and they would eventually wind up asking me not to bring him back.

I recently read Forrest Ackerman's account in *Cult Movies* magazine about John and Lugosi's scrapbook. One time John brought over three scrapbooks belonging to Ken Maynard. He told me he was holding them for Ken. "But I think Ken Maynard's dead," I said. "Yeah, I know, but I'm still holding them for him," was his answer. He seemed to be doing a lot of manipulating, if that's the word. He did things like that. He eventually sold these beautiful books for 25 bucks apiece. They're probably worth about \$25,000 each now. If I had asked John to sell them to me, which I had no intention of doing, I would have had them placed in a museum.

The last time I saw John Andrews was at 5626 Melrose where I had an office. I had finished the *Las Vegas Serial Killer* and was looking for a deal to release it. Herb Robins had just come in and as we're speaking, TOOM!! there's John Andrews at the door, like Superman, or to be precise Kramer from the *Seinfeld* show. (One of those great entrances. Kramer's a good example of a John Andrews "type." I think the man was way ahead of Kramer anyway.)

He walked in, disheveled but clean, freshly shaved and smelling of heavy cologne, with a black cab driver and a black working girl right behind him. "I'M IN THE CHIPS!" It turned out that he had inherited \$3,000. He insisted that I take some money. God, was he happy that he could give me some money. It wasn't exactly a gift or a payback. By giving that money to me, he'd have something left at a later date after blowing the rest of it. And he was ready to spend it all that night, which wouldn't be difficult since the cabbie's meter and the hooker's meter were both running.

A month later there was a message for me to leave \$20 at the front desk. And that was it. Gone out of my life again. However, this time it would be forever. Later on I learned he had been tragically killed in the street although the actual facts about his death varied. I miss John Andrews in many ways. Still, it was tough having him around sometimes. I mean *really* tough. ■

**Purchase a VHS-Beta copy of *Body Fever* with a free 8x10 b&w photo of John Andrews and R.D. Steckler for \$19.95 check, Visa or MC., autographed by Steckler. Mail to: Mascot Video, 2375 E. Tropicana #2, Las Vegas, NV 89119; phone: (702) 739-8555.**



# Korla Pandit Returns



by Michael Copner

Moody, exotic and erotic, Korla Pandit was a true phenomenon of the television airwaves in that infant medium's earliest years. Giving the first all-musical broadcast on West Coast television in 1949, Pandit went on to do over 900 live broadcasts, as well as two separate filmed series' for national syndication. He never spoke, but chose to communicate entirely via "The Universal Language of Music," performing tunes from around the world on the concert grand piano and the electric organ. To this day, fans of Mr. Pandit's video erotica recall the mood...the eyes...those coy, suggestive glances to the camera as he performed equally dreamy music for the viewer. It was television seduction at its finest, for it was latent rather than blatant. Such a television relationship would likely be impossible in this age, to an MTV generation already raped by Madonna and Michael Jackson. But for a few magical years it was wonderful – just wonderful.

Korla turned naturally to a series of recordings for Vita Records, a local releasing company in Pasadena. There he produced singles (some with a mellow voiced young lady by the name of Jette

Satin), and two full albums (*Musical Gems* and *The Grand Mogul Suite*).

He reached a higher visibility in his association with Fantasy Records in San Francisco, where he released 14 albums between 1952 and 1962. His albums were distributed internationally, reaching an audience that in some cases, had never seen his TV presentations. Some of the Fantasy titles included *Music for Meditation*, *Hypnotique*, *Korla Pandit in Paris*, *Speak to Me Of Love*, and *Music of the Exotic East*.

From that time to the present, Pandit has been off the airwaves, with the exception of occasional Anniversary Shows in Los Angeles and San Francisco. But he's always been popular on the concert circuit, and has traveled throughout the United States and Canada performing in theatres, churches and temples on many occasions.

Several years ago Korla made a big hit with his original score for Lon Chaney's *Phantom Of The Opera*, which he performed live at the Orpheum Theatre in Los Angeles on the theatre's magnificent pipe organ. Many thousands attended the sell out performances to hear Korla at his finest. Though

Korla is not known as a silent film accompanist, his brilliant original score was the talk of Hollywood for many weeks.

And now it can be told that Korla Pandit's next big appearance will be in Tim Burton's upcoming film, *Ed Wood*, set for a June release. In this film Korla will play the part of a 1950s television musician named – Korla Pandit! For nearly a week Korla filmed an elaborate party scene where other actors will portray '50s TV contemporaries, Vampira, Criswell, and other Ed Wood cronies. His rousing musical solo segues into an even more exciting dance number by Bill Murray, who plays the part of Bunny Breckenridge, another Wood actor from *Plan 9 From Outer Space*.

So you see, Korla Pandit has returned in a big way. At press time, Pandit is hard at work on an inspirational series of New Age recordings combining synthesizers, spoken word and relaxing nature sounds. To be entitled simply, *Meditations*, it will be a major production; we hope to have more information and an exclusive Pandit interview in our next issue. Stay tuned!■



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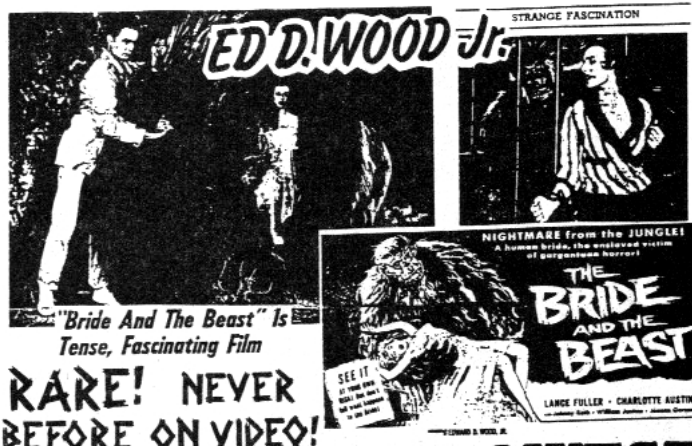
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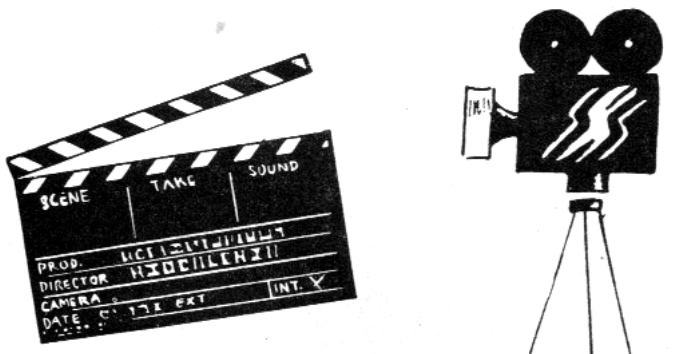
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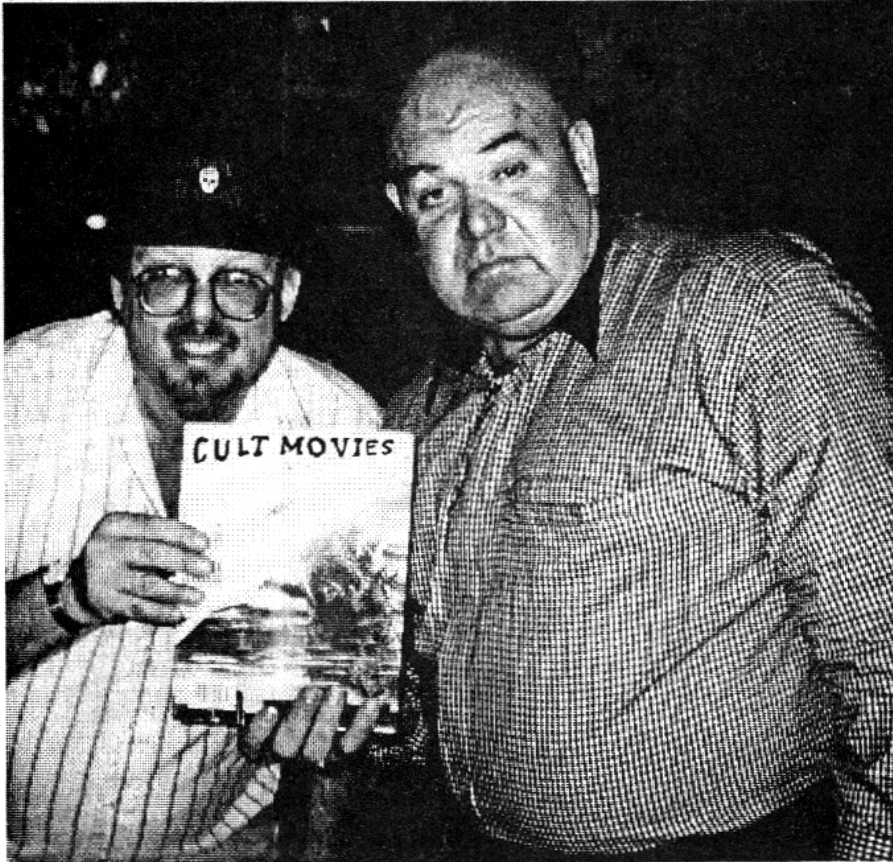
- ☐ The Abductors ('71) 2nd "Ginger" bondage thriller
- ☐ Alien Contamination ('81) Italian Luigi Cozzi dir.
- ☐ Alien Women ('69/UK) D. Addams, Y. Siensgaard
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- ☐ Angels' Wild Women ('72) Al Adamson directs
- ☐ The Angry Red Planet ('65) Les Tremayne
- ☐ Are You in the House Alone? ('83) Kathleen Beller
- ☐ Battle of the Worlds ('60/Italian) A. Margheriti dir.
- ☐ Black Cat ('91) Chinese-Eng. subs/Dir. by S. Shin
- ☐ Black Torment ('64/UK) Heather Sears, John Turner
- ☐ Blade in the Dark ('83/Ital.) Lamberto Bava directs
- ☐ Bloodbath in Psycho Town ('73) A. de Gaetano directs
- ☐ Blood Bride ('80) Ellen Barber, Philip English
- ☐ Blood Ritual ('88/Chinese-Eng. subs)
- ☐ Breeders ('86) Tim Kincaid directs/nudity/gore
- ☐ Bullet in the Head ('90) Chin-Eng. subs/Libx/John Woo
- ☐ Burke and Hare ('71/UK) Yvette Siensgaard nude!
- ☐ The Body Beneath ('71) Andy Milligan directs
- ☐ Cafe Flesh ('79/X) Post-nuclear sexcapades! Uncut
- ☐ Calitiki, The Immortal Monster ('59/Ital.) R. Freda
- ☐ Cannibal Girls ('72) Eugene Levy, Ivan Reitman dir.
- ☐ Cat in the Cage ('78) Sybil Danning, Colleen Camp
- ☐ Chamber of Horrors ('66) P. O'Neal, Hoerl Horn!
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- ☐ The Comedy of Terrors ('64/AlP) Price/Lorre, Karloff
- ☐ Corruption ('68/UK) Peter Cushing, Kate O'Mara
- ☐ Crimes of Passion ('84/Unrated) A. Perkins, K. Turner
- ☐ Cut Throats ('76) M. Pataki, Uschi Diegard, Nazis!
- ☐ Dario Argento's World of Horror ('85) M. Sandoz dir.
- ☐ Day of the Maniac ('72/Italian) Sergio Martino dir.
- ☐ Death Curse ('85/Chin-Eng. subs) Dir. Xen Lung Ting
- ☐ Death Cages ('91/Chin-Eng. subs) Joe Lewis Kung Fu
- ☐ The Devil Doll ('63/UK) B. Halliday, Yvonne Romain
- ☐ Devil Fetus ('85/Chinese-Eng. subs) Lau Hongquan dir.
- ☐ Devil Sorcery ('87) Japanese-English subtitles
- ☐ Dracula Blows His Cool ('81) J. Garco, C. Ombra dir.
- ☐ Dr. Death, Seeker of Souls ('72) John Considine
- ☐ Driller Killer ('79) A. Ferrara's notorious splatterfest
- ☐ The Fearmaker ('89/Mex.) K. Jurado, A. Carras dir.
- ☐ Forbidden Woman ('82) Jesse Vint, R. Corman prod.
- ☐ Frankenstein: The True Story ('73/TVM) 2 tapes \$30 uncut
- ☐ Free, White, & 21 ('63/AlP) L. Buchanan prod./dir.
- ☐ The Frozen Dead ('67) D. Andrews, H. Leder dir.
- ☐ Funeral Home ('81) Leslie Donaldson, Barry Morse
- ☐ Galaxy of Terror ('83) Enzo Morae, Sid Hag
- ☐ Ginger ('70) 1st of 3 thrillers with Cheri Caffaro
- ☐ Girls Are For Loving ('73) 3rd "Ginger" w/C. Caffaro
- ☐ Girls For Rent ('74) G. Spelvin, Al Adamson dir.
- ☐ Hardboiled '92/Chin-Eng. subs/Libx. John Woo dir.
- ☐ Hercules vs. The Hydra ('60/Ital.) Jayne Mansfield
- ☐ The Holy Virgin vs. The Evil Dead (Chin-Eng. subs/Libx.)
- ☐ It's Called Murder, Baby ('82) Cameron Mitchell
- ☐ Land of the Minotaur ('77/UK) P. Cushing, D. Pleasance
- ☐ The Killing of Satan ('74/Filipino) E. Pinon directs
- ☐ Journey to the Seventh Planet ('61) Sid Pink directs
- ☐ Macabre ('58) Wm. Prince, Wm. Castle directs
- ☐ Mark of the Witch ('70) Marie Santelli, Anita Walsh
- ☐ Ms. 45 ('81) A. Ferrara dir. Zoe Tarnus blows 'em away
- ☐ The Mummy and the Curse of the Jackals ('69)
- ☐ My Pleasure Is My Business ('72) Xavier Hollander
- ☐ The Night God Screamed ('73) Jeanne Crain
- ☐ The Occupant ('86/Chinese-Eng. subs/Libx.)
- ☐ The Omegas ('68/UK) Ingrid Pitt, L. Wilder dir.
- ☐ Once Upon a Time in China ('91) Chin-Libx. Jet Lee
- ☐ One Million B.C. ('40) Victor Mature, Lon Chaney, Jr.
- ☐ Paranoia ('68/Ital./X) C. Baker, Umberto Lenzi dir.
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- ☐ Psycho From Texas ('74) L. Quigley's 1st nude scene!
- ☐ The Quatermass Conclusion ('79/UK) John Mills
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- ☐ Saga of the Draculas ('72/Spanish) Helga Line
- ☐ Salo ('75/Ital.-Eng. subs) Pier Paolo Pasolini directs
- ☐ Santa Sangre ('90/Spanish) A. Jodorowsky directs
- ☐ Satan's Cheerleaders ('77) Y. DeCarlo, J. Carradine
- ☐ The Secret of Dorian Gray ('70) Helmut Berger
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- ☐ Vampire vs. Vampire ('91/Chinese-Eng. subs)
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# On The Scene Report:

By Michael Copner



Left: Eric Caidin and George "The Animal" Steele as Tor Johnson.

Above: Johnny Depp in the make-up trailer with our goodwill ambassador the amazing Conrad Brooks.

Below: The legendary Korla Pandit playing the character of Korla Pandit in the new Ed Wood film.

In the closing months of 1993, Hollywood was taken over by the cast and crew of the most unusual new film in many a full moon. The film is *Ed Wood*, and it centers around the unorthodox lifestyle and filmmaking methods of Edward D. Wood, Jr. The tale is a reconstruction of Ed's personal life; his friendships with Conrad Brooks and Bela Lugosi; relations with the various women in his life; and his professional struggles to make films at any cost, always outside the Hollywood system.

Early on in the production, I was consulted as an advisor to the film, and spent many days providing names and biographical details, as well as driving through Hollywood showing production assistants to the film, every known house, apartment, film studio and after hours watering hole where Wood, Lugosi, and their "film family" had spent time over the years. At that early stage the film was still under production at Columbia, and all my early correspondence was with that studio. As the filming date neared, there arose one insurmountable problem. Director Tim Burton insisted on shooting his film entirely in black and white. Columbia executives insisted that the film be shot in color. When neither party would give in to the other on that particular point, Columbia dropped the film on a Friday afternoon. By the following Monday morning, the production was continuing as a Disney picture – with no qualms at all about the film being black and white!

All around Hollywood, signs of production could be seen. The luxurious Pantages Theatre was used for an exterior shot of audiences lining up to see the premiere of *Plan 9 From Outer Space*. However, the inside of the theatre left something to be desired, according to Tim Burton's taste; so when that same audience is seen entering the theatre, that interior shot was taken some five

miles away in downtown Los Angeles at the Orpheum Theatre on Broadway. Actually, either theatre would be quite prestigious for a *Plan 9* showing.

For another scene, the old Brown Derby Restaurant, currently closed, was remodeled and restored to its 1950s splendor and used for a scene involving Ed Wood and Criswell.

For one particular scene, which will appear very near the start of the film, I was asked to accompany our old friend Conrad Brooks to the set. Conrad has a role in the film, but unfortunately it will not be the part of Conrad Brooks as was originally anticipated. In this scene (shot on location at Boardner's Bar, which was once owned by David F. Friedman!!!), Brooks appears as a bartender who serves a young, disillusioned Ed Wood a few drinks after Wood's story ideas have been rejected by producer George Weiss. Conrad looked very much like Jackie Gleason's "Joe The Bartender," with his spit-curls and giant apron around his belly. Johnny Depp, as Ed Wood, spent a few minutes messing up his clothes in preparation for the scene, looking very much the way a dejected, drunken Ed Wood might have looked while trying to drown his troubles. To our amazement, there was virtually no rehearsal, or even a reading of the lines by the cast. Burton explained to everyone what he wanted, asked for two takes on the scene to get a variety of camera angles, and it was finished in about twenty minutes. The scene will probably last around two minutes on the screen.

Nearly everyone on the set that day was interested in meeting Conrad. Johnny Depp posed for many photos with him, and was asking questions about Ed Wood, and the working conditions on Wood's films. We also met Brent Hinkley who plays the part of the young Conrad Brooks, and



with many of the character actors and extras in the film. At one point an interviewer from a news service stepped up and asked Conrad who he thought was the better director – Ed Wood or Tim Burton. After a moment of serious contemplation, Conrad replied, "Eddie Wood was a pretty damn good director!"

Also during this time I talked with the production people about Korla Pandit. Although Pandit never knew Wood or Lugosi, there is a slight connection inasmuch as Pandit did perform the background music for *Chandu The Magician* on radio in 1948. Lugosi had appeared in the original Chandu films at Fox and later at Principal Pictures in the 1930s.

CULT MOVIES



# ED WOOD



Ed Hinkley as Conrad Brooks gets a few pointers on how the part should be played by the master himself.



Opposite Page, bottom: The Pantages Theater in Hollywood serves as the location for the premiere of the film *Plan 9 From Outer Space*.

Upon hearing this and several other stories, the production people wrote Pandit into the existing script and made him a character in a party scene which will come as a highlight in the film. Other contemporaries of Pandit's are portrayed in the film, such as Criswell and Vampira, and other television personalities of the 1950s.

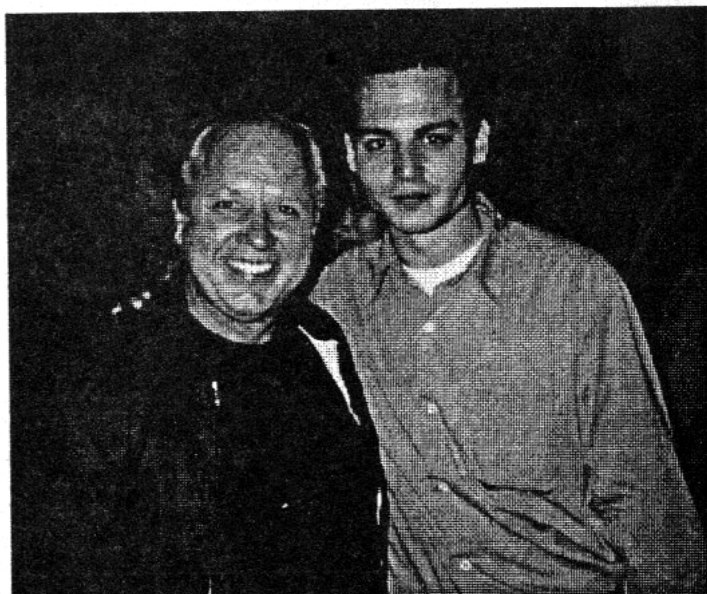
A climax to this involvement was an offer for me to appear in a scene in the film, and I eagerly jumped at that opportunity! The setting was the old Olympic Auditorium on 18th and Olympic in downtown Los Angeles, the arena where major boxing matches took place in years gone by. Although the place has been closed for over 7 years, it has been used occasionally for a film location, as in the *Rocky* series. In *Ed Wood*, the Olympic is the setting for an evening out for Ed and Kathy Wood, and their pal Bunny Breckenridge. They are attending a wrestling match between Tor Johnson and the Blue Mask. In the film, Tor is portrayed by wrestling legend George Steele, who looks very much like Tor Johnson. Part of the action calls for Tor to pick up his opponent and fling him wildly out of the ring and into the throngs of people in the audience. At that point, hundreds of people stand up and cheer. My big scene? I'm one of those hundreds of people. You might just spot me - I'm wearing a dark overcoat and waving a copy of *Cult Movies* #7 in my hand. Let me know how you like my acting.

Two more scenes were filmed at the Olympic, and I turn up in some of those also.

There is plenty of anticipation and speculation about this film. Also connected with this is the hope that the Hollywood Chamber of Commerce may grant Ed Wood a star on the Walk Of Fame in time for the release of the feature.

For more details on the new *Ed Wood* film, and some amazing articles on the life and history of Edward D. Wood, Jr. himself, be sure to join us next issue - an issue that will be devoted almost entirely to Ed Wood!

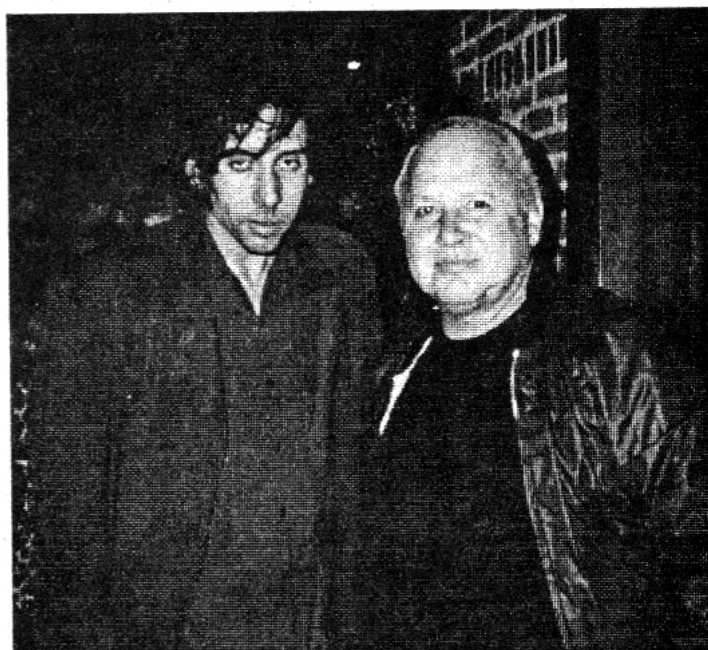
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Conrad and Johnny Depp at the wrap party for the film.



Conrad relaxes on the set in character at Bordner's Bar.



Conrad raps with his second favorite director Tim Burton at the wrap party.



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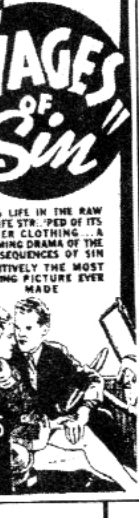
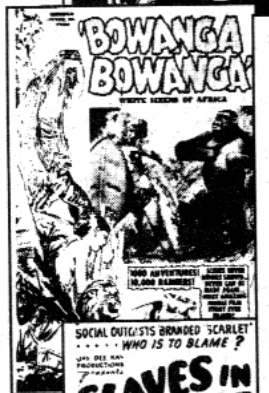
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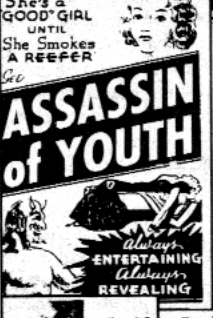
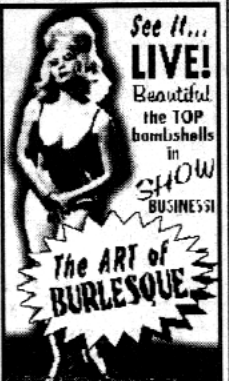
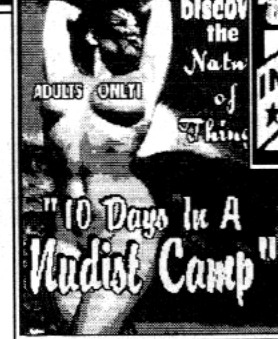
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# Cult Movies Interview:

# Dale Gasteiger

Interviewed by Michael Copner

From the late 1940s to the present, Dale Gasteiger has been active in theatrical exhibition and distribution. As an early operator of drive-in theatres, and as a founder of Headliner Productions, Mr. Gasteiger has worked with an assortment of fascinating industry personalities, from Roy Reid to Edward D. Wood, Jr. A humorous, friendly, soft spoken gentleman, Dale Gasteiger recently invited us to his Los Angeles office to conduct the following interview.

Dale Gasteiger: At the end of World War II, I was working with a group of fellows at Lockheed, and we saw that the time was coming when we'd have to be out on our own. We knew that we wanted to get into some kind of business. We knew it should be either clothing, food, or entertainment. There was a drive in theatre near Lockheed and we used to go there with our families and saw that the place was pretty crowded and said, "What does this take? Some land, some mounds of dirt, and a screen! This should be a snap." We decided that's what we'd go into. So we set out to raise some money - none of us had much money. So we worked on this, and came up with a gimmick. We saw that at a regular drive-in, the people way at the back didn't have a very close up look at the screen. So we decided to split the image, and developed and patented a system that would shoot the picture in two directions at the same time. Then we'd have two screens facing each other, with the snack bar in the center. This was our gimmick. So we talked it around, raised some money, and all the time we were looking for land. We needed about ten acres of property.

But every time we'd find the right place, the guy who had the patent on drive-in theatres went to the owners of the property and said that we couldn't open up without his permission.

Cult Movies: I never knew there was a patent on drive-ins.

DG: Oh, yes! We went to him, and he said he wouldn't give us a permit for under a million dollars! That made us mad. So we searched the records and found that there was a second patent on drive-ins by another individual.

CM: For the same thing?

DG: Almost, but the design was a little bit different. They had two rows, then the driveway, two more rows of cars and the next driveway. It did this; it brought everybody closer to the screen! We finally found the guy who had that and he put us in contact with the fellow here in LA who had the regional rights. We talked to him and instead of a million dollars he wanted five thousand dollars. So we went for the deal. Later on somebody wrote that they didn't think this was a patentable item. But what could we do? We couldn't get our money back.

Anyway, we opened the theatre, and this was about 1950. And we couldn't count the money fast enough! This was right after the war and all the families enjoyed going out together to things like this. They'd keep us there until 3 in the morning showing films. Eventually other chains got in-



Dale Gasteiger today at the offices of Headliner Productions.

volved; Pacific Theatres became the big leader in this territory. And then Edwards Theatres. And when television came in we had more competition, and our business dropped to almost nothing.

About this time, we'd been wondering why this land should just sit empty all day, and so we conceived the idea of having swap meets at drive-ins. It took a few years for this to pay off, but when it did it became a very wise move. Then other drive-ins began doing this on weekends.

So it was around this time that a man named Roy Reid came to me and wanted to make a movie.

I had a little money, so I went in on it with him and we made *The Violent Years*, which was an Ed Wood creation. It was a minimal investment - the whole thing cost \$25,000 to film. It was the biggest money maker that we ever made. And it was a bigger grosser than some of the major pictures at that time.

CM: Did you get to know Ed Wood very well?

DG: I met him, but never got to know him real well. He'd come down to our offices when he needed money and wanted to know if there were any projects he could work on. We'd give him money to polish up scripts we had. He was working on that other script for *Sinister Urge*. He did some re-writing on one called *Married Too Young*. Then he invited us out to a screening of a film he'd made called *Glen Or Glenda*? I forget where he had the screening. But I recall that he came out to the car to meet us and he was wearing white knee-high boots - these patent leather boots. And I thought, "What's going on with this guy?" Then I saw the film and realized, he's a transvestite.

CM: Did you end up keeping the drive-in?

DG: I kept the drive in, although it was doing less business in the later 1950s, and that's when I ran into trouble with the projectionists. The projectionist's union wanted me to pay a particular rate to their movie operators and I didn't want to pay it. They had one pay scale for indoor theatres and a higher scale for drive-ins. I tried to get them to give me the indoor rate because I just wasn't making that much money anymore.

But I didn't take a strike until all the other drive-ins took a strike. We went non-union. Well, as usually happens, the other drive-ins stayed out for a few days and reached a settlement and went back with the union. They wanted me to go back and I said, "No way!" The theatre just couldn't afford that high price. So I got a non-union man to stay with me and I remained non-union for about a year. We stayed open through the whole strike. They picketed out front of course, but they got kind of nasty inside. First the guys started breaking the urinals in the men's room. They'd take a big steel bar in there and smash them. Well, we dealt with that by having armed guards on the grounds during most of the time. So next they started throwing tacks in the road leading to the theatre. Most people's tires weren't as durable as they are now, so our customers had some flat tires.

So we put some microphones out where the strikers were marching up and down so we could hear what they were planning next. They also threw vials of a real volatile liquid over the fence at the cars in my theatre. I'd somehow gotten the idea that this kind of damage to property was a thing of the past, but these guys got pretty nasty.

I did manage to scare one of these projectionists when he saw me with a 22 calibre rifle doing a little target shooting on the property. I shot a tin can at about 75 hundred feet away and put a hole right in the center of it. I shot it again and my bullet went right through the same hole. The reason I know





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The brazen 1973 re-release ad art for 1947's *Mom And Dad*. Note the 'R' rating.

that is because in the back side of the can there were two exit holes, but in the front there was just the one hole.

Eventually they threatened my non-union man. It went on for quite a while, but eventually we came to an agreement.

CM: During that time did you feel it was worthwhile keeping up the battle?

DG: Oh, these problems crop up at times. But I love theatres and I love people. I've always love mingling with the audiences. Almost every week I gave something away at the box office; some little trinket. Sometimes it would be worth just a few cents each, but I'm sure a lot of those people came back week after week just to see what we were giving away – no matter what movies we were showing.

I learned something else about people at that time. I used to give out free passes from time to time, and these had "free" printed on them. And no one ever used them. But I started giving out free passes that said "25 cents" printed on them, the cost of the average movie in those days, and then people started using the passes. It has to be worth something for the people to care. But I enjoyed these kind of things, I loved running the theatre, and I loved working with the people.

CM: What's your personal favorite of all the films you put out?

DG: I guess *The Violent Years*, since it was the first film I'd been involved with. I'd never produced anything before. I learned a lot about the special effects and so on. I didn't direct ever, but I did like to be on the set constantly and watch. Headliner Productions only made three films from script to screen, but we picked up about 15 other films for distribution, films that were brought to us by others. And we also bought some foreign films, such as the karate films, and we dubbed them into English. And we had some of the older roadshow films the Roy Reid had been involved

with.

CM: Did you ever have trouble with censorship on any of the titles?

DG: I never talked with anyone on any censorship board. Actually, I don't know if you're even allowed to sit in with them until after they've seen your film and made the decisions. But none of our films ever had any censorship problems. A few of the films we acquired had to be edited a bit. Chicago was a hard town to get into because of their censorship board. Roy was the one who took care of that if there were any problems. He took a lot of those films like *Mom And Dad* around the country, and dealt with any local problems. Roy distributed *Dope Dens Of The Orient*, *Virgin Brides*, *Secrets Of A Model*, and many others. He had a lot of those old "Burlesque Queen" films and took those around the country.

We usually made decent money with these films. I made fairly good money, and was happy. Once in a while we took on a film that must have been destined to lose money. Nobody else wanted these films, but we thought we might be able to do some business with them, and ended up just barely getting our investment back. There were two films we took on with Rue McClanahan – *Hollywood After Dark* and *The Rotten Apple*, which was also known as *Five Minutes To Love*. We did nothing with those films. Of course comedy is what Rue does best, and these films weren't comedies. They were gritty pictures, and a little on the morbid side. I think she did a strip scene in one of the films.

CM: Who have you been most impressed with over the years in show business?

DG: The one I'm still most impressed with is Roy Reid. There was a showman – really something special. He and his buddies were all great show people. What's the biggest theatre left in downtown Los Angeles?

CM: Are you thinking of The Orpheum?

(continued on page 46)

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Roy Reid roadshowed this early dram about lesbianism.

DG: Yeah, I think that's the one. I think Roy opened that one; he was the manager of that. And on opening day they had a bomb go off in the sewer out front. They thought somebody was protesting the film they opened with. Roy also managed a lot of theatres down in Long Beach, and brought in lots of live acts for the stage shows. He designed all the promotion, pressbooks, layouts for the posters. He did it all.

And when we were distributing pictures he put so much into it! He was in here every day, hard at work. And I think he worked right up until the week before he died, at 94 years of age.

CM: But Headliner continues to operate?

DG: Yes. When Roy died there wasn't actually that much activity here, not much demand for these pictures. Every now and then he'd pull off some interesting stunt. He actually created a new advertising campaign for *Mom And Dad*, got the thing an "R" rating so people would think it was a brand new film, and re-released that film to the theatres in the '70s! And the thing was around 30 years old, but we squeezed a few more dollars out of it. But after Roy died even that kind of activity came to a standstill. Everything sat for about five years.

And then I got a call from someone telling me there was a young film student who wanted to meet me, and come out and look at some of these films. So I agreed, and that's how I met Greg Hatanaka. When he walked in I had reels of film sitting here for *Violent Years* and *Sinister Urge*, and Greg said, "I want to come and work for you." I said, "That's fine but we're not doing much, and there's no money for you." He didn't care; he just thought he could build up the business with some new titles as well as our old pictures. That's how we picked up these new films. We're distributing *The Killers*, the John Woo action film. We've also picked up *Minotaur*, *Memoirs Of A Madman* and *Hiruko, The Goblin*. Greg's also picked up a fantastic new film from Toho Studios in Japan called *Tokyo: The Last Megalopolis*. It's a wonderful film directed by Akio Jissoji - an apocalyptic theme with prophets, demons, and all kinds of occult forces. We have great hopes for the American

success of this film. Greg also hopes to secure more films from Toho - he's working with them on that right now. They really are Japan's most prolific filmmakers.

So as you can see, there is no end in sight. Headliner Productions continues, with a great outlook for the future!

(Next Issue: The Adventure Continues. We will feature an exclusive interview with Greg Hatanaka about the "new generation" of Headliner and his aims for the future, his most recent acquisitions, and new involvement with foreign producers. Many exciting new films to come!!!) ■

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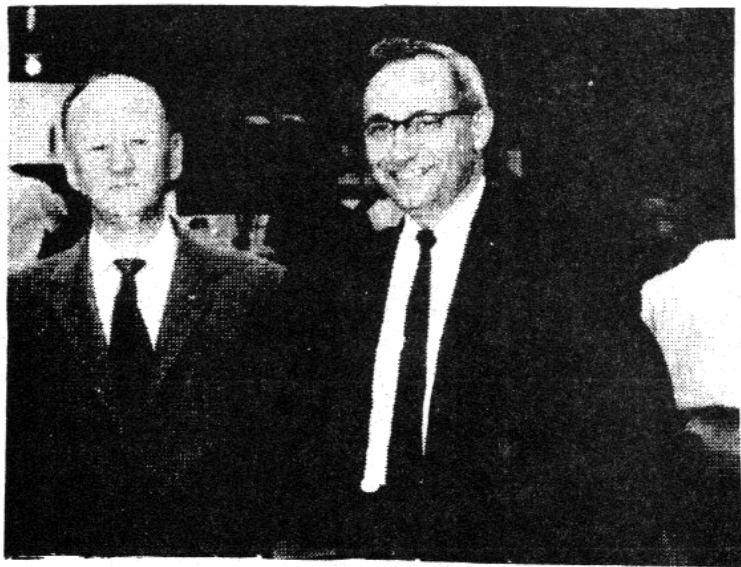
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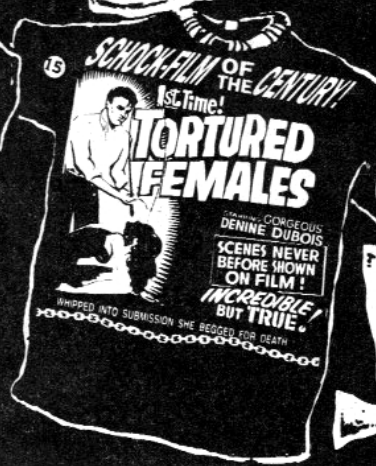
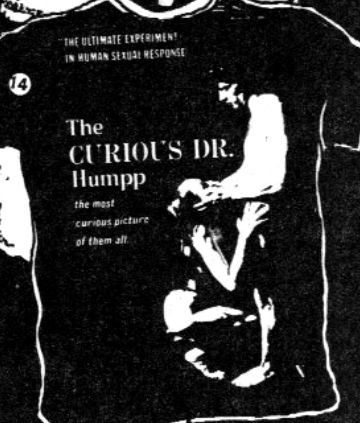
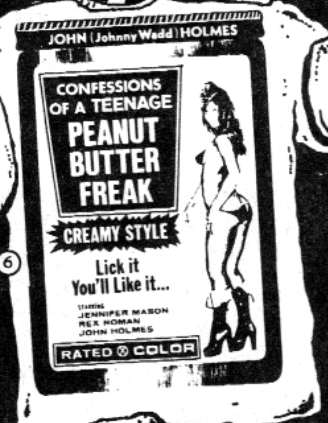
Dale Gasteiger and Roy Reid on the set of *The Violent Years*.





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# Cult Movies Interview: Frank Henenlotter (Take 2)

By Michael Copner

In the last issue of *Cult Movies*, we interviewed filmmaker Frank Henenlotter on his new video series, "Sexy Shockers From the Vault," an initial cache of 17 unusual titles from the 1960s, most thought to be lost. Judging from your fan mail, this interview was among the most popular items we've ever published. With that in mind, we've brought Frank back again to tell us about the "second series" of releases, now available under the "Sexy Shockers" banner.

In March of this year, Michael Copner spoke with Frank Henenlotter in his New York home.

**Cult Movies:** I want to talk about your new video releases. But first, I have to ask you about *The Honeymooners*. Last week I heard that you are a tremendous fan of Jackie Gleason - which is good to know, since I agree he's The Greatest.

**Frank Henenlotter:** Oh, yeah, *The Honeymooners* are wonderful. And I'm one of those fans who could be quite content with just those Classic 39 episodes. I still haven't gotten comfortable with the Lost Episodes yet; I enjoy hearing the lines from those famous 39, waiting for the punch lines.

**CM:** Did you watch the color shows in the mid-'60s when they were musical extravaganzas?

**FH:** I hated those. Where they won the cereal contest and went on the world tour - that was terrible. Once they left that tiny apartment it lost all appeal for me. And I resented the new Alice.

**CM:** Well, Gleason had four different Alices over the years...

**FH:** But Sheila MacRae was too nice to him. Audrey Meadows seemed like the only one who could stand up to him.

**CM:** Their ratings went way up when they started doing *The Honeymooners* again, even with the new wives.

**FH:** I'm not surprised, after that crazy *American Scene Magazine* thing Gleason turned his show into. I never liked that; the same thing each week.

**CM:** That's true. It seemed to be a case of, "Let's see how dumb we can make the jokes and still get laughs out of it." But anyway, let's talk about movies. I just saw, *The Electric Chair*, a part of your new series.

**FH:** That's one of those regional rarities that we were amazed to find. I was surprised that this even had a theatrical release, but it did. It seems to be an early precursor to those *Faces Of Death*-type films, with emphasis on the, "We're now going to actually show you a human being getting electrocuted in the chair."

**CM:** The whole reason for the film to get made is to show those two scenes.

**FH:** Yes. And in the first one, where they kind of tease the audience, that's actually the director of the film in the chair - Pat Patterson. He's the only one who wildly overacts, and fumbles all his lines throughout, then when they strap him into the chair and are just getting ready to pull the switch - oops! They're going to let him live! Then they hold you off for another 45 minutes until you get to see someone die in the chair. Then when they finally get to the climax, they're going to juice somebody, it's Pat Patterson's wife, playing the part of Claire. And they ask her, "Do you have any last words before you die?" And her last words on

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earth are, "That two-timing son of a bitch!" And yes, when they finally show her getting electrocuted - yes friends, the special effect is a sparkler on top of her head. It's mind blowing isn't it? Patterson had been an assistant to H. G. Lewis, he's one of the hillbillies in *Moonshine Mountain*. He just decided to go it alone and make films. Did you like *Electric Chair*?

**CM:** I was pretty bored with it until that grand finish with the sparkler. The acting was so bad...

**FH:** It was awful, and that's what I find fascinating about it. Everybody speaking with a Carolina accent. A very bland, cheaply done film, yet they got it together and got it onto the screen, oddball as it is.

**CM:** With everything we ran last issue about *House On Bare Mountain*, is there anything left to say about it?

**FH:** Oh, boy! I don't know. I'd hate to say anything bad about it.

**CM:** I interviewed Bob Cresse, the producer, and he thought it was a wonderful film!

**FH:** Sure, because he's in it all the time. Let's face it; the problem with Cresse is that he's doing Jonathan Winters as Maude Frickert. And if you've seen Winters, he does it better than Cresse and he's funnier. A little bit of Cresse in drag goes a long way with me. And it does seem adlibbed because we hear the same joke over, and over, and over. I did enjoy the Harry Thomas werewolf make-up. It's one of his rush jobs, and hardly any Harry Thomas make-up in the history of films ever looked finished, and this was another one. But it looked pretty good. I'd love to find out who that werewolf

actor was, because he looks like a giant. Whether or not the film's any good, it's still historically important because it was the first to mix monsters with topless women.

**CM:** Cresse does seem to be modeling the film after some of those sketches on the Jonathan Winters comedy albums. The same names turn up...

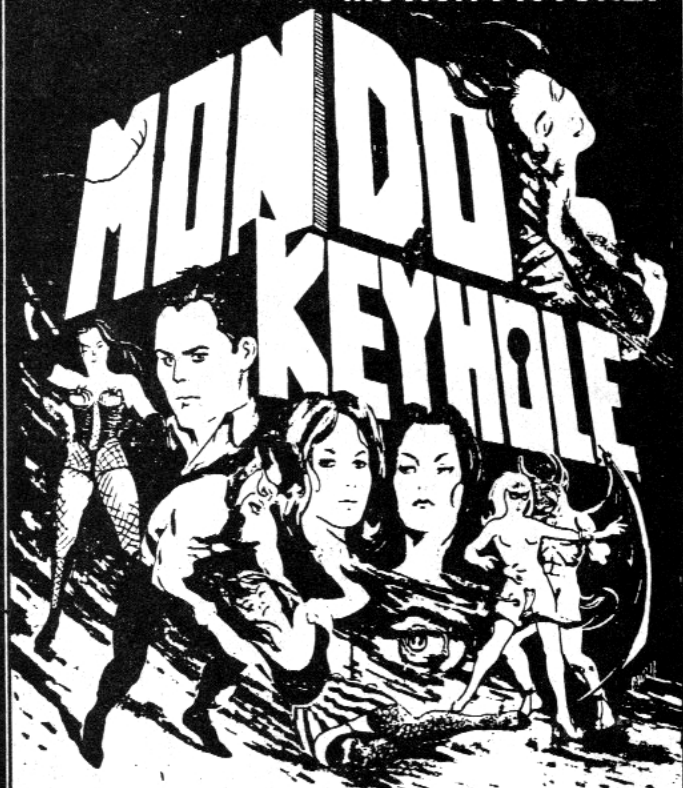
**FH:** In the 1960s, Winters was at the height of his success. He was on Jack Paar's show, he was big in nightclubs - he was really sailing along. He had an early 15 minute TV show, before having his variety show on CBS. What year was *House On Bare Mountain* - 1961? Well the very next year Winters is in his first movie, *It's A Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World*. And I can see how audiences at the time might have stumbled onto *House On Bare Mountain* and think it truly was Winters, because Cresse is a dead ringer for him.

**CM:** Another strange one in the *Sexy Shockers* is *Ultimate Degenerate*.

**FH:** That's a nice sickie! That's Michael and Roberta Findlay. For that one Michael called himself Julian Marsh. His wife Roberta called herself Anna Riva. On the back of the video box I wrote, "Michael truly is the ultimate degenerate!!!" If you've seen some of his other films, such as *Curse Of Her Flesh* and *Anne Of A Thousand Pleasures*, you'll see that this is the weirdest of them all. The highlight of this film is torturing a girl's nipples with clothespins, then electrocuting her. Then there's lots of lesbians and whipped cream. *Degenerate* is certainly a good word for this. And it holds up well. You really get the feeling of watching a dirty movie. There's no explicit sex, but it's



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and AGAIN  
and AGAIN!*

directed by JOHN LAMB produced by JOHN LAMB and RONALD GRAHAM

just creepy. I can imagine audiences squirming in their theatre seats when this played. It's one of those where you'll want to take a shower after watching it.

CM: Another one like that in the series is *Invitation To Ruin*, which I ran simply as *The Invitation* in theatres I managed back in 1976. I imagine you had to cut it way down for the video release!

FH: There was some cutting. That's another unpleasant one. It originated in 1968, and then Dave Friedman put it out later with new scenes added. Some thoughtfulness went into it, such as bringing Roger Gentry back to play the same character, doing flashbacks to the earlier story and so forth. But it certainly is an odd mess of a film, isn't it?

CM: When we ran it in the theatres, we had customers coming back weeks later saying they were still having nightmares about Mamma Lupos, the huge dyke who shoves the smoldering torch inside the young woman's vagina.

FH: The whole thing is a nightmare! The idea of mixing sex and violence can be a fun combination until it just goes too far, and *Invitation* is one of those – it's completely unpleasant.

How about *Mondo Keyhole* – have you seen that? Jack Hill did the photography on that. It's obviously based on *The Twilight Zone*. It's got drugs, and bondage, and some strange psychological horror. There's a scene where they're tying up a guy in the back of a store and there's a clock with

no hands on it, and one of the characters says, "Oh, Freud would have loved this!" It's a little strange, and very well done.

*Mondo Keyhole* played at a theatre on 42nd Street when I was a kid. Once in a while they'd check for I. D. and I was under 18, so they wouldn't let me see *Mondo Keyhole*. But I remember looking at the poster and really wanting to see it. Year later I hunted down that poster and ended up buying it. That's my posters that we use for the artwork on the video box.

CM: Mike Vraney found this 35mm print in a drive-in, but seemed to think it got no real release at the time.

FH: Well, I don't know what he's basing that on, but you can tell him he's wrong. I remember there was something about that poster that made me really want to see it. I used to cut classes in high school and come to see films in Manhattan when it was really alive, and I'd just watch movies all day. The problem was never what to see, but how to see it all in one day. There were so many films on 42nd Street! And if you'd wait and come back a day or two later, that film would be gone and something else completely different would be showing – new double and triple features every day or two. Those days were great, and unfortunately long gone.

CM: Tell us about *She Mob*.

FH: Oh, another great one. A shot-in-Texas roughie with all kinds of sickness. There's the big

psychotic lesbian named Big Shim, who has giant shoulders and wears a bra with giant black pointed cones for the breasts. Somebody in the plot speaks of her as, "The bitchiest dyke in the world." It's her and four girls who've escaped from prison and are hiding out in this house. Big Shim's favorite plaything is a chick named Baby, who has a tit job, so that when she lies flat on the bed her boobs still stand straight up; you could tee golf off of them. And the girls capture a guy, hold him for ransom, and the stud's rich girlfriend comes to pay the ransom. And for no reason that I can see, the rich girlfriend is played by the same actress who plays Big Shim. There's no thematic comparison, except inasmuch as they share this same guy. It's a nice dual performance – the name of the actress is Marni Castle. Unfortunately, we don't know much else about her, what other films she's done. As Big Shim she looks like a rival of Divine, but she's good.

There's another one called *Room Of Chains*. Have you seen that?

CM: Not yet.

FH: It's a French film that played drive-ins and 42nd Street. That one is so simple, I guess I missed the point. There are two guys. One of them is married, and he also has a gay boyfriend. And they go around capturing women, stringing them up and torturing them. That's it. And about the only explanation for what's going on is when one of these guys has a line, "Everybody's crazy. Why should we pretend we're not?" And that's all there is to it.

There's a gardener at the house who goes around with a real bad Moe Howard wig and a rubber mask on his face, and I don't think they want you to know this is they guy who's torturing the women. And there's illogical scenes where you hear sounds of women being whipped, yet nobody's holding a whip. And it gets real crazy and you think this is the worst story ever written, but they tell you it's based on a true story, so it must be good.

Another wacky one is *Girl From Sin*, which is an invisible man movie. I love special effects movies being attempted on budgets of about twelve dollars, and that's what this is. You can see strings moving things around, and all the most obvious attempts to make this trick work. The director of the film plays a comical mad scientist who invents the invisibility serum. The guy's name is C. David Smith, and he also shot a number of Doris Wishman films, such as *My Brother's Wife*. He has a strange technique. He loves to show meaningless cutaway shots of things like a vase or a light fixture. He'll have a hand held camera come zooming through the room to shot on a shot of an empty chair. One time he had a shot from the point of view of a wooden stool; and a woman walked over and sat on the camera lens!

CM: Are you picking all these films personally that wind up in the *Sexy Shockers* series?

FH: Yes. But the fact that we've included them may not necessarily indicate that I think these are wonderful films. I just think they should be saved because they are films. Sometimes strange films which got produced under the most dubious conditions, but films. That's all that matters. We're doing a museum-by-video here. If it's on film and it's rare, let's put it out on tape!

CM: What a great company policy. Any closing comments to our readers?

FH: Yeah, hope to see you all in New Jersey at the *Chiller Theatre* Convention in May. I'll be at the Something Weird Video table, along with Coffin Joe, Jim Steranko, Monique Gabrielle, Dave Friedman, and Conrad Brooks. It's gonna be nothing but fun!!! ■

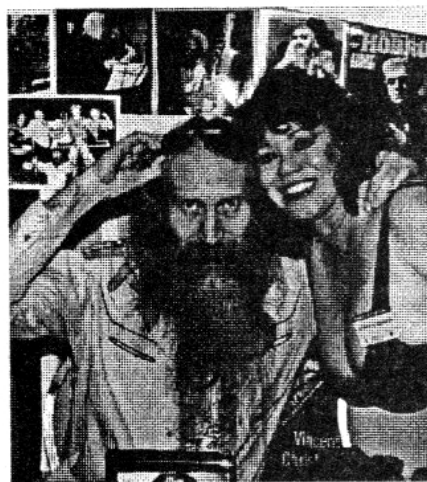


# Chiller Theatre Convention 1994: Kevin Clements speaks on Bringing Coffin Joe to America!!!

**Cult Movies** magazine is honored to be associated with Kevin Clements and his *Chiller Theatre* Convention in New Jersey. The *Chiller Con* is rapidly snowballing into the largest and most consistently exciting convention in the United States. At the upcoming convention in May, the undisputed highlight will be the first-ever American appearance of the legendary Coffin Joe! This provocative, original and highly unorthodox filmmaker from Brazil has become the topic of much study and speculation among terror film fans in the United States. Now *Cult Movies* and *Chiller Theatre* join forces to bring this amazing figure to American shores for his debut appearance here. Coffin Joe will be one of the many guests appearing at the Something Weird Video table this May – and is looking forward to meeting his American fans. See the back cover of this magazine for more details and a list of guests as of this writing (more celebrity guests are being added as the event draws nearer!) In anticipation of more *Chiller Theatre* shows – including two per year on the West Coast – we spoke with Kevin Clements about what goes into making a good convention tick, click – and stick!



(from left) Ingrid Pitt, Kevin Clement and Veronica Carlson enjoy the festivities at Chiller Con '92.



Johnny Legend and Kitten Natividad.

**Cult Movies:** Putting on a convention is a lot of work! What made you want to try it?

**Kevin Clements:** As a kid I loved monsters and science fiction. Then I got out of it for a while, until my early '20s. And then I became more devoted than ever before. I decided that I wanted to work in some way with the people I'd admired as a kid – Dave Friedman, Forry Ackerman, Zacherle, and so on. I did one *Chiller Theatre* Convention on my own, and it turned out pretty well. This is our 9th one coming up, over a four year period of time. They seem to be doing better each time, and that's all anyone can ask for. I'd been to other people's conventions and thought I could do better, and it seems to be turning out that way.

**CM:** Okay, so what do you do to make *Chiller Con* better?



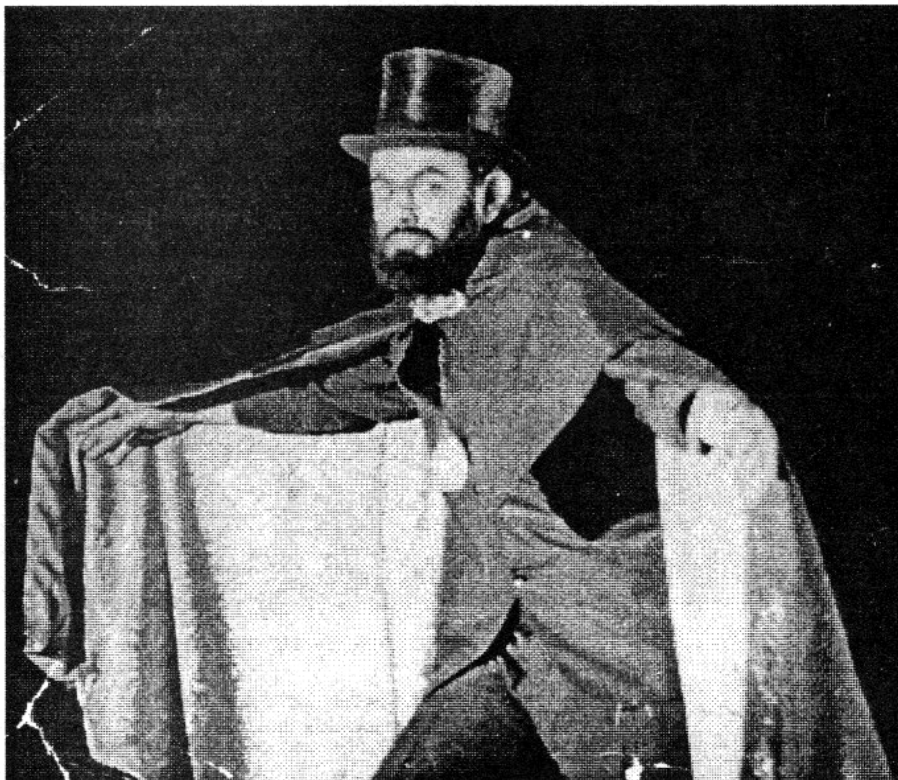
Chiller Con co-promoter Susan Clement and Robert (Hideous Sun Demon) Clarke.

**KC:** Lower admission prices, more guests, and greater access to those guests. I don't like guests who don't enjoy meeting their fans, or who take that attitude, "Only one autograph and you can't take any photos of me!" There have been some like that. We try to get guests who are comfortable meeting and conversing with fans.

**CM:** I know who some of your past guests have been. Tell me about some of my favorites. How was Ray Harryhausen?

**KC:** Great guest! When we had him he'd just won his Academy Award, a lifetime achievement award, and we were the first con to have him after that. He's in his '70s and like a lot of people who've reached that stage, he liked things done real orderly and right away. If I took too much time attending to him he'd get a little miffed at me. But overall he was just the greatest. Real generous with the fans, answered all their questions, really





*Coffin Joe is set to make his dramatic American debut at Chiller Con '94.*

enjoyed being there. I've only praise for Mr. Harryhausen.

CM: How about Butch Patrick?

KC: Can I get sued for this??? Actually, Butch was a nice guy. But he drank a little bit too much and he got sick a few times. Rick Sullivan from the *Gore Gazette* had some cases of beer stored in the refrigerator and Butch drank it all, so Rick was a little mad at him.

CM: How about Grandpa; have you ever invited Al Lewis?

KC: We tried to get him, but he wanted two thousand dollars for an hour of signing autographs. That was a bit steep, plus right across the river he had his eatery, so anybody who wanted his autograph could see him there.

CM: I hear his place is closed now.

KC: Yes. In fact it closed about a week after Fred Gwynne died. I think Al may have kept the place just as a get-together spot for the two of them. I heard Fred used to stop by a lot. They stayed pals since *The Munsters*. But with him gone, Al closed up shop.

CM: Have you had Monique Gabrielle before?

KC: She's been here three times and she's always real popular. The other one who the fans like is Melissa Moore.

CM: What do you do when you're not promoting conventions?

KC: We've got our *Chiller Theatre Store* at 47 Park Avenue in Rutherford, New Jersey. We sell movie posters, photos, books, all sorts of good stuff. The store is steady income, but it's the conventions that are fun.

CM: Who have some of your favorite guests been?

KC: Zacherle is just great. So is H. G. Lewis. Ingrid Pitt is one of my personal favorites. We've never billed Frank Henenlotter as an official guest, but he's appeared at the last three shows we've done. So this time we're billing him and his *Basket Case* "in person." They'll be at the Something Weird table along with Jim Steranko, Harry Novak, Dave Friedman, and many others.

I'm trying to think of some of the others. Forry

Ackerman is just great. The fans gather around him and he can hold court for the entire two days if he wants to. Everybody loves Forry – the godfather to us all.

And this time we're anxious to be bringing Coffin Joe to America. I've never met him, but I'm sure looking forward to it. I love his movies. They're tastefully strange and shocking. They truly are terrifying. I'm still trying to figure out if he experimented with LSD in the '60s or if he's just naturally strange. But he's a hell of a good filmmaker, and I'm looking forward to meeting him.

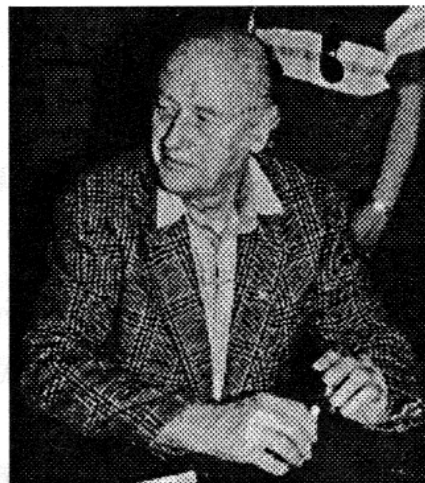
CM: How did you enjoy Harry Novak?

KC: He's a wild man! He's from the old school – a barker and a showman. He can sure sell those videotapes. And he's got a lovely wife, who probably keeps him going strong.

A lot of this talent, such as Harry Novak, has to be imported from Hollywood. So I'm seriously gearing up to start doing at least two *Chiller Theatre Conventions* each year on the Pacific Coast. Most surely in Los Angeles and also perhaps one each year in San Francisco. I think it would be a lot of fun, and I know there are lots of fans out there who would have fun with our kind of show.

CM: That sounds great! When will you make the decision?

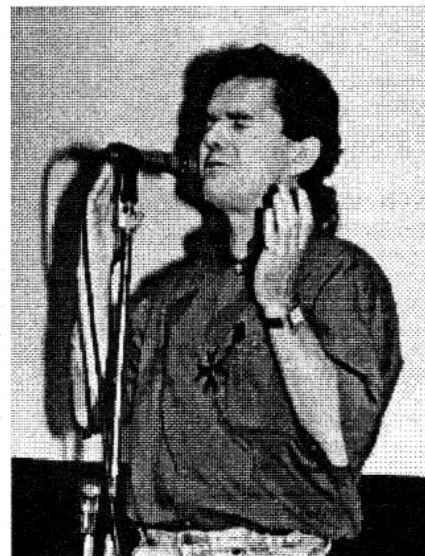
KC: Very soon now. And when the details are finalized, I'll be calling the offices of *Cult Movies* that very minute. You guys will be the first to know.



*Ray Harryhausen*



*Forest J. Ackerman and Rick Sullivan (Gore Gazette).*



*Butch Patrick (Eddie Munster).*

**Come see the staff of Cult Movies Magazine at the Chiller Con on May 21-22, 1994 at Rothman Center, Fairleigh Dickinson University in beautiful Hackensack, NJ!**



# Coffin Joe Invades America!



by Andre Barcinski

Beware!  
Take heed!  
Be on the lookout!

For Coffin Joe, the sinister one from Brazil, filmmaker with a thousand terrors, is coming to America, soon. And he may be out to get you!!!

Last December I went to Brazil for one of the most unusual celebrations in the history of the movies. In Sao Paulo, on December 17th, Coffin Joe was the center of attention at a party in honor of his 50th career birthday, and the 30th birthday of the screen character Coffin Joe. At a huge auditorium filled with fans of Coffin Joe, film students dressed as devils and messengers of evil brought a coffin center stage; amidst much fanfare and applause the coffin opened and from it emerged the very picture of terror and evil - Coffin Joe himself.

For the next 30 minutes he gave an impassioned speech to his followers, speaking of his life as a rebel filmmaker, and telling of exciting events about to take place in his life. Perhaps the *Cult Movies* readers will find these of interest.

Recently Coffin Joe had to undergo serious corrective eye surgery. Ever the showman, and thinking of new projects for the screen, he arranged to have the operation filmed. Around this he is creating a new film of horror, entitled *Eye Of The Gates Of Hell*, projected to be his most shocking film thus far.

Two different Brazilian rock bands have asked Coffin Joe to direct MTV styled music videos for them, one of which will feature an appearance by Coffin Joe.

He also announced that he has located a 16mm copy of his audition reel from his early films. This is the only documentation of those films, and shows actors testing for their parts by eating live spiders, holding live electrical wires and so forth. Hopefully he will be bringing this test reel when he comes to the United States this year.

Also, a video production company has hired him to direct a new project for television, entitled *Knights Of Armageddon*.

Most exciting of all, for Coffin Joe and for terror fans in America, was the official announcement that Coffin Joe will be the official guest of honor at the *Chiller Theatre* Film Expo on May 21 and 22 of



this year. Held at the Rothman Center at Fairleigh Dickinson University in Hackensack, New Jersey, this event promises to be the greatest convention event of the year. Coffin Joe states that he will be bringing his original coffin - his dwelling place in many a horror film - and is looking forward to meeting his new fans in America. Look for him at the Something Weird Video table, along with many other special guests, including the editorial staff of *Cult Movies* magazine. Though speaking primarily Portuguese, with a limited command of English, Coffin Joe will have his entourage and a staff of interpreters to bridge the language gap. He has also arranged to have available a few collectors items, such as personal photos from his films, videos which have not been sold in this country, etc.

The word from Kevin Clement of *Chiller Theatre* is that "The phone is ringing off the hook" with questions about Coffin Joe, and it seems as though interest is running very high in anticipation of the man's first American tour. There is also the dis-

tinct possibility that Coffin Joe will be appearing in a new film to be produced here during his stay, and that there will be some film festivals staged showing 35mm prints of his greatest films.

For more information about the upcoming *Chiller Theatre* Convention and the American tour of Coffin Joe, call (201) 804-8040.

Also of interest are these new video releases, five of Coffin Joe's greatest, now available in subtitled VHS copies exclusively from Something Weird Video.

*This Night I Will Possess Your Corpse (Esta Noite Encarnarei no Teu Cadaver, 1966).*

This is an incredible sequel to *At Midnight I Will Take Your Soul*. Coffin Joe continues the quest for the perfect woman that will give him the perfect child. After being acquitted of the crimes committed in the first movie, Coffin Joe returns to his country town.

He kidnaps six women and subjects them to all kinds of physical and psychological torture, in order to test their courage. In one of the most impressive scenes ever filmed by Coffin Joe, an army of tarantulas (real spiders of course!) attacks the girls during the night.

Producer Augusto de Cervantes invested some money in this movie, and Coffin Joe (Jose Mojica Marins in real life) was able to hire more extras and build some sets, including a very creepy chamber of horrors.

As usual, the whole city turns itself against Coffin Joe: a powerful colonel sends his thugs to kill him, but the grave digger takes care of them in a gruesome way.

In the end, Coffin Joe is dragged to hell by the incarnated spirits of the women he killed. The unbelievable hell sequence, with corpses hanging from the wall and devils torturing slaves, is shot in color.

*Coffin Joe's Visions Of Terror*

A compilation of 14 trailers of some of Mojica's better movies, including classics such as *At Midnight I Will Take Your Soul*, *Awakening Of The Beast*, *Hallucinations Of A Deranged Mind* and *The Strange World Of Coffin Joe*, plus a 20-minute installment, *Macabre Nightmare*, from the movie *Trilogy Of Terror*.

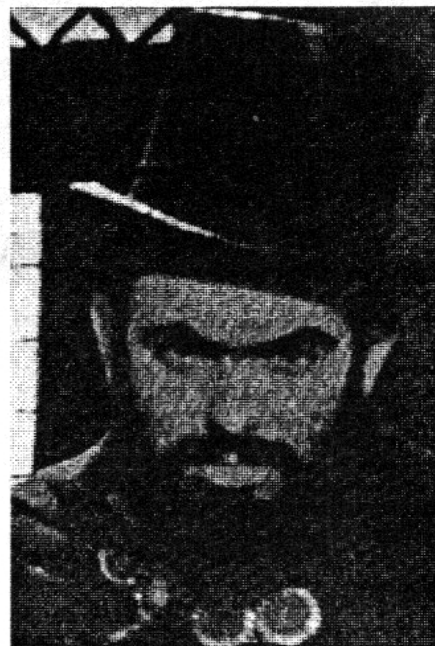




Above: Newspaper art for *At Midnight I'll Take Your Soul Away*.

Coffin Joe's filmmaker daughter Mariliz Marins (left) resides in Paris.

Coffin Joe at his menacing best from *Despertar Da Besta*.



Marins (below) gets down and real dirty in *Estupro* (Rape.)

The tape is very interesting as an introduction to Mojica's work. The trailers are rare and were transferred from Mojica's own personal collection. Some of them are really funny, like the one from *Hallucinations Of A Deranged Mind*, where a narrator reads: "For the first time in the history of movies, the Para-Visual process is used. This process allows the movie to penetrate deep into the public's mind."

*Macabre Nightmare* is a great and scary movie about a man haunted by nightmares caused by his fear of being buried alive. The hallucination sequences are among Mojica's best work to date. Highly recommended.

#### *The End Of Man (Finis Hominis, 1971)*

This is not a horror movie. Mojica is especially proud of this one, a tale about a Billy Graham-style preacher who performs miracles and soon becomes a Messiah, attracting thousands of followers.

He saves the life of a child and resurrects a businessman who had died of a heart attack, after his greedy relatives killed him by lying that his unfaithful wife had passed away. In one of the funniest scenes, *Finis Hominis* penetrates a hippie orgy.

Mojica says that this movie is a "warning" for millions of people who are fooled by preachers and televangelists and that the message is that no one can solve your problems but you. An interesting movie about the exploration of faith.

#### *The Strange Hostel Of Naked Pleasures (A Estranha Hospedaria dos Prazeres, 1975)*

Mojica produced this film, directed by his disciple Marcello Motta. Mojica plays the owner of a strange hostel where businessmen, gamblers, lovers and hippies look for shelter during a stormy night. During the night, the sinners meet their destiny and are punished with horrible deaths.

The film has some bizarre, surrealistic and psychedelic ambience seen in *Hallucinations Of A Deranged Mind*. Some scenes are visually impressive, like the one where the image of a beating heart is superimposed with the image of a clock. The plot is predictable, but the beauty of some scenes make the film worth a look.

#### *Perversion (Perversao, 1978)*

The original title was *Estupro* (Rape), but it had to be changed due to censorship problems. Mojica plays a millionaire who amuses himself with strange sexual habits. In a gruesome scene, he bites a girl's nipple off, only to show it as a trophy to his friends.

One day he meets a beautiful girl and falls instantly in love. She rejects him at first, but it is only a plan in order to get revenge for the harm that the millionaire caused to women.

In order to finance the movie, Mojica convinced a wealthy Brazilian woman, accused of killing her husband in real life, to give him the money. He assured her that the movie would be "a wake-up call to all men who treat women unkindly."





# Akira Ifukube

## Interview - Take 2

by David Milner  
Translation by Yoshihiko Shibata

This interview with composer Akira Ifukube was conducted in Tokyo shortly after *Godzilla vs. MechaGodzilla* opened in Japan. Mr. Ifukube is best known for his numerous science fiction film scores, but he also has received recognition for his many fine orchestral works.

**Cult Movies:** Many have said that they think the score you wrote for *Godzilla vs. MechaGodzilla* is the best of your last three. (Mr. Ifukube scored *Godzilla vs. Ghidrah* in 1991 and *Godzilla vs. Mothra* in 1992.)

Akira Ifukube: I was given only three days to write the score! Usually a composer named Mr. Ikeno assists me, but since I was so rushed this time, I had to hire another man, a younger man who used to be a student of mine, to help out as well.

**CM:** Do you feel that the score is the best of your last three?

**AI:** It's the one that was most painful to finish! *Godzilla vs. MechaGodzilla* was not completed on schedule, so I had less time than I usually do to compose the score.

We spent two days recording the music, two days mixing it down and another two days dubbing the film. We had to spend more time mixing down and dubbing than we usually do because of the new digital sound equipment. (*Godzilla vs. MechaGodzilla*, the first Japanese motion picture to feature digital sound, was also recorded with analog equipment so that theatres which were not equipped with digital sound systems could show the film.)

**CM:** I didn't know that you hired assistants to help you write your film scores. What exactly do they do?

**AI:** They don't compose any of the music or do the orchestration. They just write out the full orchestra score from the parts that I write for each of the instruments.

**CM:** Was it your idea to associate the vocal piece in *Godzilla vs. MechaGodzilla* with the baby Godzilla, or did the idea already exist when you were brought in to score the film? (The piece is perceived by a group of psychic children after they are presented with scrapings from the egg of the baby Godzilla.)

**AI:** It was my idea.

**CM:** I understand that the piece is in Ainu. What made you decide to write it in that language? (The Ainu are Japan's equivalent of the American Indian.)

**AI:** At first, I didn't intend to use the piece in the film. Instead, I planned to use it only as a timing cue. So, I originally wrote it only with nonsense syllables.

Since the piece is sung by children, difficult words would not have been appropriate. Latin also wouldn't have worked. So, I decided to use Ainu. The Ainu live in the northern part of Japan (in Hokkaido), close to Adonoo Island. (Adonoo Island, located in the Bering Sea, is the island on which Rodan and the egg of the baby Godzilla are discovered in *Godzilla vs. MechaGodzilla*.)

By the way, the word *tapkaara* was originally



Akira Ifukube in his home. (Photo by Dave Milner.)

Ainu. (One of Mr. Ifukube's orchestral works is titled *Sinfonia Tapkaara*.)

**CM:** Many film composers have begun recording their scores without giving the performers an opportunity to see any footage from the film they are working on. However, you have not. Why is this?

**AI:** More and more film scores are being recorded the way television scores are. The performers are not shown any footage. However, I don't like working this way because if you don't allow the members of the orchestra to see scenes from the film on a big screen, they tend to perform as if they are in a concert hall. They try not to stand out. They just try to perform as one of the members of the orchestra.

What is needed when scoring a film such as *Godzilla vs. MechaGodzilla* is playing that is much more aggressive. No matter how much you explain the character of Godzilla to the performers and urge them to play aggressively, they will still play as if they are in a concert hall. However, once you show them footage of Godzilla, their playing changes dramatically. This is why I insisted on being allowed to show footage to the performers before I agreed to score *Godzilla vs. Ghidrah*.

The most difficult members of the orchestra to select are the violin players. They are trained to play with some sophistication, and that's not how you want them to perform when they are scoring a Godzilla film. Brass players, on the other hand, just naturally tend to perform a little more aggressively.

**CM:** I was very sorry to hear about the death of Ishiro Honda. What was your professional relationship with him like? (Mr. Honda directed *Godzilla*, *King Of The Monsters*; *King Kong vs. Godzilla*; *Ghidrah*, *The Three-Headed Monster*; *Destroy All Monsters* and many other science fiction films. He also worked very closely with Akira Kurosawa on *Kagemusha*, *Ran*, *Dreams*, *Rhapsody In August* and *Madadayo*.)

**AI:** Mr. Honda always gave me complete control over the score. Even though he was very knowledgeable about music, he would always come up to me and say, "Mr. Ifukube, I know very little about music, so I'll allow you to make all of the decisions concerning the score." Mr. Honda was a very generous man.

All of the other directors I worked with would stay in the control booth while the scores for their films were being recorded. Only Mr. Honda would come out of the booth and stand beside me while I was conducting. He was always very curious.

**CM:** He didn't do anything - he just observed.

**AI:** Yes, that's right.

By the way, the last time I saw Mr. Honda, I was in Books Kinokuniya in Shibuya (a section of Tokyo). I was there looking for some books, and at one point I noticed that the man standing next to me was Mr. Honda. This took place about a year or two ago.

**CM:** How was working with Kazuki Omori and Takao Okawara different from working with Mr. Honda? (Mr. Omori directed both *Godzilla vs. Biollante* and *Godzilla vs. Ghidrah*. Mr. Okawara



directed *Godzilla vs. Mothra* and *Godzilla vs. MechaGodzilla*.)

AI: There was more continuity to Mr. Honda's cuts. Like many other contemporary directors, both Mr. Omori and Mr. Okawara tend to insert footage that interrupts the flow of the story, and it is very difficult to have the music accommodate these scenes.

CM: Have you ever done any work for television?

AI: I did a few television scores about thirty years ago, but I was not very happy with the way they turned out. Most people listen to television with the sound much lower than it should be, and this reduces the intensity with which they hear lower frequencies much more than higher ones. Because of this, my music did not sound the way it should have. So, after scoring one documentary and several dramas, I decided not to do anymore work for television.

I also worked on a few radio dramas. In those, the suspense was created with words, rather than music, so I couldn't really create any excitement in them.

I recently scored a documentary filmed in high-definition television about the Kushiro marshlands in Hokkaido. The producers asked only if they could use some of my music in the documentary, but when I saw the rushes, I noticed that the music didn't fit very well. So, I decided to compose some new pieces for the documentary.

CM: Which of your orchestral works would you recommend to people who aren't familiar with your music?

AI: *Japanese Rhapsody*, *Sinfonia Tapkaara* and *Shaka*.

CM: Are those your favorites of your orchestral works?

AI: They are not the most popular ones, but they are my favorites.

CM: When we talked last year, you mentioned that much of your music was influenced by Ainu

music. Which of your orchestral pieces would you say were most influenced by it?

AI: *Eclogues After Epos Among Ainu Races* is especially influenced by Ainu music. There are even some traditional Ainu motifs in it.

A lot of Ainu music features rather long phrasing, and this is characteristic of my music as well. Also, a great deal of both Ainu and Japanese folk music is made up of short motifs that are repeated over and over again, and I often use this technique, called *ostinato*, in my music.

CM: Your *Ballata Sinfonica* is especially well known in the United States. Is that the first piece for which you received international recognition?

AI: My debut work, *Japanese Rhapsody*, was well received by foreign music critics, but it was not recorded right away. The premiere performance of my second work, the *Ballata Sinfonica*, on the other hand, was recorded and broadcast, and this allowed it to be heard by a much greater number of people.

CM: Did you give any thought to arranging your *Japanese Suite* for the orchestra when you first wrote it? (Mr. Ifukube originally wrote the piece for piano alone, but many years later rearranged it for the orchestra when he was commissioned to do so by the Suntory Music Foundation.)

AI: I composed that piece when I was only nineteen years old as a tribute to the Spanish pianist George Copland. It did not occur to me to arrange it for the orchestra at the time.

CM: Which instruments do you play?

AI: Piano, violin and lute.

CM: How would you say your compositional style has changed over the years?

AI: My earlier pieces seem a little unpolished to me now. I spend more time revising my work these days.

CM: Your style of conducting is very subdued. You often give cues only by slightly nodding your head.

AI: I work out all of the problems during the

rehearsals, so there really is no need for me to do more than what I do during the final performance.

CM: What work did you do before you started scoring films?

AI: I taught composition at a music school in Nikko. (Nikko is located just north of Tokyo).

CM: What do you think of the music of Masaru Sato? (He composed the scores of *Godzilla Raids Again*, *Godzilla vs. The Sea Monster*, *Son Of Godzilla* and numerous other films.)

AI: I am not very familiar with his music. He only does film work, and I don't go to see very many movies.

CM: The Toho Company Limited has announced that it intends to produce another film featuring *Godzilla* in the near future. Will you score it if you are asked?

AI: No more *Godzilla* films for me! They'll have to get someone much younger. I'm too old.

CM: What about *Yamata Legend*? (It is a fantasy film featuring a giant hydra that Toho is planning to release in Japan in July.)

AI: Give me more time or give me more strength! During the press conference held to promote *Godzilla vs. MechaGodzilla*, I didn't directly say, but I suggested, that it would be the last film that I would score.

CM: How definite is that decision?

AI: It's really not possible for me to do any more film scores.

CM: Well, I think that your score to *Godzilla vs. MechaGodzilla* is a very good one. I think it's one that you can be proud of.

AI: Thank you.

Corrections to the Akira Ifukube interview which appears in issue nine:

Two of Mr. Ifukube's favorite composers are Manuel de Falla and Robert de Visée, and not Faure and Bizet, respectively.

Mr. Ifukube did not score *Godzilla's Revenge*. Kunio Miyauchi did. ■

## Godzilla vs. MechaGodzilla: Godzilla's Twentieth Outing Proves To Be One Of His Best

by David Milner

*Godzilla vs. MechaGodzilla*, the latest of the *Godzilla* films produced by the Toho Company Limited, is a significant step up from *Godzilla vs. Mothra* (1992) and *Godzilla vs. Ghidrah* (1991), the two previous entries in the series. The script, the direction, the acting, the music and the photography all show marked improvement. However, what makes the film stand out most is the superb work of special effects director Koichi Kawakita and his staff.

The optical effects in particular are extremely impressive. *MechaGodzilla's* rays are very well animated, the beams emitted from the two maser cannons of the Garuda, the huge aircraft specially constructed for use against *Godzilla*, seem like they actually are discharges of electricity, and *Rodan's* radioactive breath has a very interesting fluorescent quality to it.

Also especially good is the matte work. There are a number of composite shots in which people are seen running away from a monster, but in none of them is it possible to judge where the footage of the monster and that of the people are joined.

The computer graphics aren't quite as elaborate

as those seen in *Godzilla vs. Mothra*, but they are more than adequate. The sequence showing the computer analysis of *MechaGhidrah*, the cyborg that appears in *Godzilla vs. Ghidrah*, is done in a style consistent with what one might expect to see on the screen of a computer being used by an automobile or aircraft designer, and the footage representing the construction of *MechaGodzilla* is sufficient to imply what isn't shown. Only the brief shot of the *MechaGodzilla* cockpit shuttle transporting the crew to their stations should have been done differently. It is meant to show the shuttle itself, rather than a representation of it, but it is too sparsely detailed to be convincing.

There are a few scenes featuring the monsters that are very atmospheric, and this makes them much more affecting than they otherwise would be. The terrain of Adonoa, the island on which *Godzilla* and *Rodan* battle, is very rough, after having to give up on retrieving the new five-foot tall baby *Godzilla* from the Japanese National Life Sciences Institute, *Godzilla* passes through Osaka in front of a smoldering sky, and when *Godzilla* and the baby head out to sea together, moonlight is seen shimmering on the surface of the water.

Almost all of the other special effects footage also is very well done, but there is a little in which credibility is stretched quite a bit. It is very difficult

to believe that either *MechaGodzilla* or the Garuda could actually fly, the idea that Rodan would turn into a silvery mist and then completely disappear after he lands on top of *Godzilla* is one that belongs more the fantasy genre than the kaiju eiga, or monster genre, when the baby *Godzilla's* eyes turn an angry red the light bulbs inside them can almost be seen, and in the scene in which *Godzilla* lifts up and then tosses aside *MechaGodzilla*, it is obvious that he is getting a little help from some wires.

Takao Okawara's direction reflects a little more thought than his work on *Godzilla vs. Mothra*. There are a number of sequences which illustrate this, but the one in which the baby *Godzilla* emerges from his egg does so most clearly. In a long, drawn out series of shots, his shadow, his feet, his side, the back of his neck, his jaws, and then finally his entire body are shown. These shots are interspersed with footage of some of the people who work at the Japanese National Life Sciences Institute showing more than just a little concern, and this creates a great deal of suspense.

The acting generally is very good, but not extraordinary. The best performance is given by Ryoko Sano, who somehow manages to make Azusa Gojyo, the woman who is put in charge of caring for the baby *Godzilla*, really seem like she just adores him, but Masahiro Takashima also is very convincing as Kazuma Aoki, the somewhat clumsy but lovable lug who not only comes up with the idea of docking the Garuda onto the back of *MechaGodzilla* to create Super *MechaGodzilla*, but also saves the crew of the giant robot from *Godzilla* during their final battle with him. Sur-

(continued)



prisingly, even the Americans, none of whom are professional actors, aren't all that bad. Sherry Sweeney gives a credible performance as MechaGodzilla co-pilot Katherine Burger, and Leo Mengetti, who plays Dr. Asimov, a robotics expert, only seems out of his element in one or two spots.

Kenji Sahara, whose acting credits include *Rodan* (1956), *King Kong vs. Godzilla* (1962), *War Of The Gargantuas* (1966) and many other science fiction films, gives a good performance as United Nations Godzilla Countermeasures Center director Segawa. However, his role is a small one, and the only time his character really stands out is when he gives Azusa permission to joint the baby Godzilla in his container for the helicopter ride from the U.N.G.C.C. to Tokyo.

The director of the Mind Development Center, the institute at which a number of psychic children somehow perceive a piece of music when they are presented with scrapings from the egg of the baby Godzilla, is competently played by Tadao Takashima. His science fiction films credits include *King Kong vs. Godzilla*, *Atragon* (1963), *Frankenstein Conquers The World* (1965) and *Son Of Godzilla* (1967), and he just happens to be the real life father of Masahiro Takashima.

There are two in jokes in *Godzilla vs. MechaGodzilla* that are not very difficult to miss. Reiko, the name of the computer system that operates MechaGodzilla, is taken from *Super Girl Reiko* (1991), the first film directed by Takao Okawara, and the two Mind Development Center attendants who always say the same thing at the same time are played by Keiko Imamura and Sayaka Osawa, the girls who appear in *Godzilla vs. Mothra* as the cosmos, the two tiny alien women who also always speak in unison.

The Godzilla costume is very similar to the one used in *Godzilla vs. Mothra*, but it is a little bulkier and its head is a little smaller. These are minor differences, but they do somehow make Godzilla seem a little more menacing.

The new MechaGodzilla's features are more rounded than those of the one that appears in both *Godzilla vs. The Cosmic Monster* (1974) and *Terror Of MechaGodzilla* (1975), and this makes it much less frightening to look at. However, its array of weaponry is even more intimidating. The rainbow-colored ray emitted from the mega buster, the device located inside MechaGodzilla's mouth, is similar to the one emitted from the eyes of the previous MechaGodzilla in both appearance and force, but the plasma grenade, which emits a yellow ray from the abdomen of MechaGodzilla, and the shock anchor, which is similar to the Godzilla grip, the huge grappling hook attached to high voltage wires that is shot out at Godzilla from MechaGhidrah's chestplate in *Godzilla vs. Ghidrah*, are much more powerful than any weapon

that has ever before been used against Godzilla.

Rodan, the only monster in the film not portrayed by a person in a costume, is somewhat different from his incarnations in *Rodan*, *Ghidrah - The Three-Headed Monster* (1964), *Monster Zero* (1965) and *Destroy All Monsters* (1968). He is much smaller in comparison to Godzilla and his beak is longer and flatter.

Like Minya, the son of Godzilla that appears in *Son Of Godzilla*, *Destroy All Monsters* and *Godzilla's Revenge* (1969), the baby Godzilla is meant to appeal to children. He is very cute, and he is portrayed more as a puppy dog than a dinosaur. However, he is handled with just enough restraint to prevent him from alienating adults.

Akira Ifukube's score is the best one he had done in many years, which is to say that it is one of the best that has ever been done for a science fiction film. Godzilla's theme is based on the same motif as the main title track from *Godzilla - King Of The Monsters!* (1954), and Rodan's is identical to the music heard whenever the giant pteranodon appears in *Ghidrah - The Three-Headed Monster*, *Monster Zero* and *Destroy All Monsters*. However, instead of MechaGodzilla's theme from *Godzilla vs. The Cosmic Monster* or the one from *Terror Of MechaGodzilla*, there is an entirely new piece which suggests immense power. Also new are the G-Force march, an appropriately militaristic piece, and the music that is associated with the baby Godzilla. It is very haunting, and it makes the ending credits worth watching.

Since *Godzilla vs. MechaGodzilla* is meant to commemorate the fortieth anniversary of the release in Japan of *Godzilla - King Of The Monsters!*, there are a number of scenes in it that are reminiscent of ones in some of the previous Godzilla films. Godzilla is first seen in a shot very much like the one in which he initially appears in *Godzilla - King Of The Monsters!*, some of the footage showing Godzilla attacking a petrochemical complex is similar to footage showing him destroying one in *Godzilla vs. The Thing* (1964). Godzilla searches the sky for Rodan in a very brief sequence that is almost exactly the same as one in *Ghidrah - The Three-Headed Monster*, and Godzilla's breath and one of MechaGodzilla's rays intercept each other in a shot that is reminiscent of one in *Godzilla vs. The Cosmic Monster*. It would have been very easy for Toho to get carried away with these scenes. However, since they are kept short and infrequent, they come across not as rip-offs, but merely as reminders.

The symbol created for the U.N.G.C.C. is based on that of the United Nations itself. The only difference is that the world map is replaced with a silhouette of Godzilla. This not only is a little pretentious, but also not in the best of taste.

Wataru Mimura's script is different from those of all of the previous Godzilla films in that it

focuses solely on how people react to monsters. There is no interweaving plotline revolving around greedy businessmen, corrupt politicians, overly zealous scientists or aliens trying to take over the Earth. This makes for a very exciting and fast-paced film, but it does not allow for much character development.

The pacing indeed is brisk, but it generally is not too much so. Only the lull in the action after the first battle between Godzilla and MechaGodzilla should have been drawn out a little longer. G-Force's attack on Godzilla with planes, tanks and so on follows the battle almost immediately, and this leaves virtually no time for the viewer to catch his breath.

Godzilla's roars are the same as the ones used in *Godzilla vs. Mothra*, and Rodan's are from *Rodan*. However, those of both MechaGodzilla and the baby Godzilla are new. MechaGodzilla's is appropriately artificial sounding, but some of the baby's also seem mechanically produced. This makes them difficult to accept as genuine.

*Godzilla vs. MechaGodzilla* is much more graphic than any of the previous Godzilla films. Blood spurts out when the shock anchor is embedded in Godzilla's body, Rodan's chest is ripped up by the ray emitted from MechaGodzilla's plasma grenade, and both Godzilla and Rodan foam at the mouth after being attacked by MechaGodzilla. These scenes are even more explicit than some of those *Jurassic Park* (1993), but in keeping with the tone of the kaiju eiga, they are not meant to be taken as seriously.

Yoshinori Sekiguchi's standard photography is very good, but Kenichi Eguchi's special effects lensing is just magnificent. There are a large number of scenes in which the monsters really do seem as immense as they are supposed to be, and in some very cleverly shot footage of MechaGodzilla in its dock, the robot is seen very slightly out of focus so that it will seem much larger and further away than the MechaGodzilla costume which is actually being shown.

In a scene in which Godzilla walks past the MBS Broadcasting building in Osaka, there is a close-up showing the logo on the building. There are commercial tie-ins in *Godzilla vs. The Thing*, *Godzilla vs. Biollante* (1989) and some of the other Godzilla films, but few of them are as blatant.

At present, two new films featuring Godzilla are in the works. Toho's is scheduled to open in Japan in December, and TriStar Pictures is planning to release the first American made Godzilla film sometime in 1995. Both undoubtedly will be first class productions, but what is not as certain is whether either one will be as visually impressive or as purely entertaining as *Godzilla vs. MechaGodzilla*. It sets a very high standard which will not be easy for either Toho or TriStar to match.

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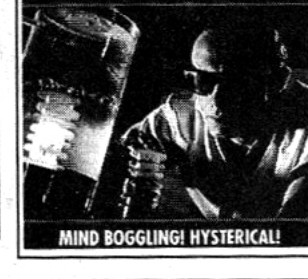
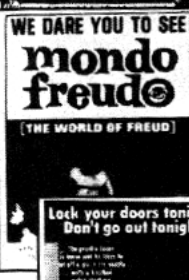
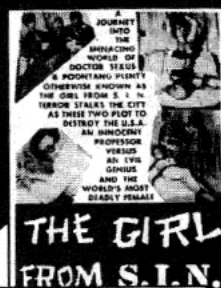
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## PERVERSION

(Estupro-Perversao)  
1978 color

This movie is sick! Marins plays a millionaire with bizarre sexual habits. In one of his most "inspired" moments, he bites off a girl's nipple only to show it as a trophy to his friends. The original title *Estupro* (Rape) had to be changed due to censorship.



## THE END OF MAN

(Finis Hominis)  
1971 b&w

This is Marins' "serious" movie. He plays Finis Hominis, a preacher with alleged supernatural powers. See Mojica waking up the dead, curing paraplegics and penetrating the psychedelic world of the hippies. A very interesting study on the exploration of faith and mysticism.



## THE STRANGE HOSTEL OF NAKED PLEASURES

(A Estranha Hosteria  
dos Prazeres)  
1975 color

Produced by Jose' Mojica Marins and directed by his disciple Marcelo Motta, this horror movie shows Mojica as the owner of a haunted hostel where the guests can make their most abnormal dreams come true. The many bizarre scenes invoke the same ambience as his earlier banned film *Awakenings of the Beast* (1968). There's plenty of violence.



## THIS NIGHT I WILL POSSESS YOUR CORPSE

(Esta Noite Encarnarei  
no Teu Cadaver)  
1968 b&w w/color insert

In this sequel to the classic *At Midnight I Will Take Your Soul*, Ze do Caixao (Coffin Joe) continues his search for the perfect woman that will give him a perfect child. This film has some of the most intense horror scenes of Mojica's career. See him crushing people's heads in his horror chamber, torturing innocent women with 50 real tarantulas and finally meeting the incarnated spirits. The movie is in black & white, except for an outstanding sequence in which Coffin Joe is dragged to Hell, where he is forced to watch all kinds of atrocities. The poster for this movie reads: "SEE HELL IN COLOR!"

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# The Dark Eyes Of London

(1939 Pathe/Monogram, Great Britain)  
by Bryan Senn

**"I wanted to devote my life to the healing of mankind. I wanted to be a doctor. But they got together, those narrow-minded, prejudiced medical men, to see how they could ruin me. Brilliant but unbalanced - that was their verdict."**

**-Dr. Orloff**

## Synopsis

A body, floating in the Thames River, washes ashore. In the Criminal Investigation Department of Scotland Yard, the chief berates his men: "Five insured persons have been found drowned in the last eight months and not one of you has brought in a scrap of evidence as to who benefitted, though all the claims, heavily underwritten, have been met." Inspector Holt is given the assignment of checking out an insurance company run by a certain Dr. Orloff.

At Orloff's office, Mr. Stewart borrows money from the doctor. Orloff, a philanthropist at heart, tells Stewart of his charity work: "I wanted to be a doctor but... Brilliant but unbalanced - that was their verdict. And so I serve the blind. In Greenwich, Mr. Dearborn, himself blind, runs a home for blind vagrants." Orloff urges Stuart to go and visit the institute, which Orloff supports and there "learn the joy of giving charity."

When Inspector Holt arrives at Orloff's office, he learns that two of the five deaths under investigation involved Orloff's insurance business. After the Inspector leaves, Orloff types out a message in braille and tosses it out the window to a blind violinist playing on the sidewalk below. The blind messenger takes the note to Dearborn's "Home for the Destitute Blind," where the white-haired, soft-spoken Mr. Dearborn reads the Bible (a braille Bible, of course) to his many charges. Among them is Dearborn's deformed assistant, an ugly, hulking brute named Jake, who is also blind.

Later, Stewart makes his promised visit to Dearborn's institute and is greeted by Dr. Orloff himself; Dearborn is out. Lew, the blind (and mute) violinist seen earlier, drops a note - unseen - into Stewart's pocket. Orloff shows Stewart up-

## CAST

Bela Lugosi... Dr. Orloff  
Hugh Williams... Inspector Holt  
Greta Gynt... Diana Stewart  
Edmon Ryan... Lieutenant O'Reilly  
Wilfred Walter... Jake

Alexander Field... Grogan  
\*Julie Suedo... Secretary  
\*Arthur E. Owen... Dumb Lew  
\*Gerald Pring... Henry Stewart  
\*Charles Penrose... Drunk

\*credit not appearing on American prints

Alternate Title: *The Human Monster* (American)  
Release Date: November, 1939 (British); March 2, 1940 (American)  
Running Time: 75 minutes  
Director: Walter Summers  
Producer: John Argyle  
Screenplay: Patrick Kirwan, Walter Summers, John Argyle  
Adapted from the novel by Edgar Wallace  
Additional Dialogue: Jan Van Lustil  
Photography: Bryan Langley  
Camera: Ronald Anscombe  
Music Composed and Arranged by: Guy Jones  
Organ Music: C. King Palmer  
Production Manager: H.G. Inglis  
Production Assistant: George Collins  
Recording Supervisor: H. Benson  
Sound Recording: A.E. Rudolph  
Film Editor: E.G. Richards  
Art Director: Duncan Sutherland  
Assistant Director: Jack Martin  
"The producers gratefully acknowledge the co-operation of the National Institute of the Blind"



stairs, where Jake is waiting to murder the man!

Meanwhile, a Chicago detective, Lieutenant O'Reilly delivers to Scotland yard an English crook and forger named Grogan. Inspector Holt suspects that Grogan has some connection with Orloff. O'Reilly is assigned to work with Holt on the case in order to "learn something of our antiquated methods" (as Holt's sour superior puts it).

Stewart's body is found floating in the river, just like all the others, and Holt discovers a note in the dead man's pocket - a note in braille. The lab report later reveals that the water in Stewart's stomach was ordinary tap water and not river water from the muddy Thames. "Stewart wasn't drowned in the Thames," reasons the Inspector. "He was drowned somewhere else and dumped there afterwards." In short, it was not suicide or an accident, but murder.

Grogan is bailed out by Orloff, who then forces the crook to forge Stewart's signature on an insurance policy naming Orloff as the beneficiary. Inspector Holt returns to Orloff's office with more questions. Orloff explains that Stewart was experiencing financial difficulties and Orloff had lent him some money. When the Inspector learns that Stewart had a life insurance policy with Orloff's company, he asks if Stewart's daughter was the beneficiary. "I'm the beneficiary," replies Orloff. "You see, Stewart made over the policy to me when he couldn't meet the premiums, in return for the loan of 2000 pounds."

Orloff sends Jake out to murder Grogan, in order to make sure the forger won't talk. He then contacts Stewart's daughter, Diana, who had recently returned to England. The doctor, claiming to be a concerned benefactor, arranged for the girl to take a job with Mr. Dearborn as his secretary. Inspector Holt learns of this new development and forms a plan with Diana, who desperately wants to solve her father's murder. "Somewhere between Orloff's office and the Dearborn place is the answer," Holt tells her. "That's all I know. Now, you go there, keep your eyes open, and keep in touch with me. I'll never be far away from you."

Back at the institute, Orloff learns of Lew's treacherous note and straps the unfortunate to a cot in the upstairs "hospital" room. Holding him up to a weird machine, Orloff tells him, "You have been very foolish, Lew. You have been writing on little bits of paper. The police have been here. They might come back, Lew, they might ask you questions. You're blind and you can't speak, but you can hear - and that will never do!" As he finishes



speaking, Orloff places a sinister electrical device over Lew's ears and the man screams.

Down in Dearborn's office, Diana has run across a check from her father, a donation to Dearborn's institute, with it is a note stating that Orloff is arranging for him to come for a visit - on the evening he was murdered. Orloff enters the office and sees Diana with the incriminating note, but says nothing. Moments later, Orloff sends Jake to silence her.

Back at the Yard, the Inspector has now figured it all out and relates his deductions to O'Reilly. "[Orloff] runs an insurance company," begins Holt. "He takes out bogus policies, forges the signatures of carefully selected people and lays off the sum to the underwriters. He waits a reasonable time in paying the premium and everything is above board..."

"Then neatly bumps them off," interjects the fascinated O'Reilly.

"[He] collects the money from the underwriters," continues Holt, "and makes a fictitious entry in his books saying the money has been paid out to people that don't exist!"

Diana places a call to Holt from her flat, just as Jake breaks in. The two investigators, hearing her screams over the phone, rush to the house and scare Jake off before the deed can be done.

Scotland Yard puts out a warrant for Orloff's arrest, but somehow the murderer manages to elude this "nation-wide search." Holt and O'Reilly visit Dearborn to question him about Orloff. The Inspector tells the incredulous Dearborn (who claims that Orloff was the "kindest man I'd ever met") that "[Orloff] used you. He gave money to your institute in order to get the blind men here as dupes." Holt also wants to question Lew but finds he can't get through to the ailing man, who is now deaf as well as blind and dumb. The Inspector has a solution, though, and he instructs



Dearborn: "I want the man to answer some questions. If the poor devil can't see, hear, or speak, he can still feel. So if you have these [questions] transcribed into braille he can write down the answers."

Shortly thereafter, Diana (who had gone back to work at Dearborn's on the off chance of learning something more) discovers a cufflink in a cupboard in Dearborn's office. "This cuff link belonged to my father," she tells Dearborn, "how did it get into this house?" The blind man replies, "I don't recall ever seeing this before," and looks down at the object in her hand. "You're no more blind than I am!" declares Diana. "You're a fake, and you're shielding the man who killed my father." But Diana is wrong. Dearborn is not shielding the murderer, for he is the murderer. Dearborn





removes his dark glasses and wig and drops his disguised voice to reveal – Dr. Orloff!

Orloff ties Diana up and forces her to watch as he drowns Lew in a tub of water (insuring that he can't even "write down the answers") and then dumps his body out the window into the Thames. Orloff summons Jake and orders him to eliminate Diana and "this time make no mistake." Diana, desperately kicking and screaming as Jake is about to immerse her, frantically asks, "Where's Lew, Jake? He's gone, Jake. Orloff got rid of him, like he got rid of all the others." The ploy works, and Jake, who had genuinely loved the blind violinist, goes on a rampage. Orloff enters and Jake moves to attack him, but Orloff shoots his former henchman. "I will have to settle with you myself," he tells Diana. Before he has a chance to "settle" with her, however, the police arrive and Holt breaks into the institute. Orloff mixes a few chemicals and sets up a smoke screen downstairs. Bolting up the stairs to the "hospital," he locks the door and starts to climb to the roof. Jake is not quite dead, however, and he grabs Orloff's leg. Staggering to his feet, the mortally wounded giant struggles with Orloff and finally pushes him out the window – to be sucked into the mud flats of the river below. Holt arrives, Diana is freed, and O'Reilly goes home, telling the embracing couple to "put me down for a couple of bucks for a wedding present."

## Memorable Moments

A startling moment occurs when Dr. Orloff shows Mr. Stewart around Dearborn's institute. Beaming out his beneficence, the doctor leads Stewart up the wooden stairs to their "little hospital." Smiling benignly, Orloff opens the door and they step in, with the camera remaining outside and shooting through the door. Stewart suddenly stops. Then as he turns to look at Orloff in confusion, we see past him to the hulking figure of Jake, a straight-jacket raised in his hands, advancing menacingly toward Stewart. As both Stewart and the audience sense danger, the man turns to flee, but a quick move from Orloff causes the door to slam shut in his face (and ours). Looking at the now-closed door, we hear Stewart's terrified scream. This scene makes good use of surprise, catching the viewer off-guard by Lugosi's easy, smiling manner, and by having the menace initially hidden by the bodies of the two men as they open the door. Then the sudden slamming of the door, shutting us off from the horror within, coupled with the awful single scream, lets our imaginations do the rest.

The sequence in which Diana is attacked by Jake in her apartment is the picture's most effective set-piece. While Diana talks on the phone, the door opens behind her. At the same moment, the lights go out. She turns to see a dim, hulking figure, and screams. Jake, growling, lunges for her in the dark. Desperately trying to elude his outstretched arms, Diana makes it into the bedroom and locks the door. She turns on the lights with a sigh of relief, but her relief is short-lived as the homicidal madman beats and tears at the door with animalistic fury until it finally bursts open. He swipes at the light switch and plunges the room into terrifying darkness. Backing toward the wall, Diana frantically grabs a lamp and turns it on, holding it in front of her in a pitiful attempt to ward off the monstrous brute. Jake stumbles into it and grabs the lamp. Almost absentmindedly, he rips off the shade and grasps the bare bulb, screaming in pain when his hand touches the hot object. Venting his sudden fury, Jake crushes the bulb in his hand and grabs Diana's throat, meaning to crush it too. At that instant Inspector Holt rings the doorbell and Diana is saved.

Throughout this sequence, Diana's terror is in-

tertwined with the darkness itself. She is terrified when the lights go out and temporarily relieved when she escapes to the light of the bedroom lamp. Terror again surges when the lamp is violently extinguished and darkness (death) closes in. The fact that Diana's brutish attacker is blind, familiar with a world of perpetual darkness, only underscores the terror of the situation. Darkness is made out to be a frightening thing, full of violence and horror, thus effectively evoking (and exploiting) the viewer's own primal fear of the dark and ultimately intensifying the horrific mood of the scene.

## Assets

For what is essentially a crime-drama decorated with horror trappings (it is a Lugosi vehicle after all, and so the producers felt it *must* be a horror picture), *The Dark Eyes Of London* possesses some nice macabre touches. The tone is set in the opening credits, which begin with a shot of London Bridge and the Thames. Suddenly, Lugosi's unmistakable eyes are superimposed over the image and zoom towards us out of the foggy



background. Perhaps director Walter Summers had seen *White Zombie* (1932) and felt that if the actor's trademark stare was good enough for that film, it was good enough for this picture. In any event it makes for a promising introduction. Following this, the pledge of macabre thrills is extended further with the startling sight of a body floating face up near a pier. In a series of quick cuts we follow the bloated corpse as it drifts out into the open water and finally washes up along the shoreline in a crumpled heap. Yes indeed, Summers wastes no time in getting to the chills and this whets our appetite for the gruesome doings to come. Unfortunately, because this film is structures like a crime-thriller, we must labor through long stretches of detective work before any other shivers are forthcoming.

Summers, with the invaluable aid of cinematographer Bryan Langley, makes sure things move briskly, even through the less-active stretches. The fluid camera movements and varied set-ups draw the viewer into even the more mundane expository scenes. The camera is never left stationary for long – it moves almost constantly, though not to the point of intrusion. This roving eye not only looks from side to side, following a character across a room, but it also moves forwards or backwards at the same time, tightening or opening up the frame as desired. This adds a depth to

the visuals which a simple linear, left-to-right motion lacks. Nor is all this movement without purpose. Summers utilizes these techniques to introduce or include characters in a shot. Instead of simply cutting from one character to another as they talk, for instance, the camera will pull back to reveal the second speaker, or follow the movement of one as he approaches another until they both stand within the frame.

Summers even utilizes the camera to create shocks, as in the introduction to Jake (the "Human Monster" of the American title). When the doorbell to the institute rings, our vision rests on Dearborn, a mild-looking, white-haired, elderly gentleman sitting peacefully in an overstuffed chair. In a gentle, pleasant-sounding voice, he says, "Answer it, Jake." The camera suddenly moves up and away from Dearborn and over to a large figure standing beside the chair. Then, in one fluid motion, the camera quickly zooms in to a close-up of Jake's hideous countenance. Lit from below, his face is seen in high-contrast with the shadows emphasizing his ugliness. The suddenness of the motion from the harmless-looking Dearborn to the shadowy, ugly Jake transforms a simple introduction into a startling shock. Of course, nothing shocking happens – Jake just answers the door – but this brief, almost inconsequential moment becomes an ominous portent of horrors to come.

Lugosi is excellent. At ease as the quick-thinking Orloff, he speaks glibly and easily with Holt while periodically injecting that patented Lugosi treatment (malevolent stare, odd inflections) to remind the audience of what's in store. His facial expressions and pregnant pauses work wonders. "Find me poor Stewart's number in the phone book," he tells his secretary. "I want to communicate with his daughter." Lugosi's odd inflection on "communicate" and his drawn out "daughter" invests this simple statement with hidden, sinister meaning. Summers took full advantage of Lugosi's talent for menace: As the actor speaks, the camera moves in ever-so-slowly – almost subliminally – to augment Lugosi's delivery and imbue it with even more malevolent intensity. Later, when Orloff drowns poor Lew, Lugosi's cruel, satisfied smile speaks volumes about the sadistic nature of his character. On the basis of Orloff and Ygor (in *Son Of Frankenstein*), it is evident that Lugosi was in fine form during his first year back after a fifteen-month exile from the screen. This makes it all the more regrettable that *The Dark Eyes Of London* was Lugosi's last truly worthy starring vehicle. With few exceptions (*Ghost Of Frankenstein*, 1942; *Return Of The Vampire*, 1944; and *Abbott And Costello Meet Frankenstein*, 1948), it was leads in poverty-row potboilers or red-herring bits in Major films from here on out.

Shakespearean actor Wilfred Walter is quite good as Jake, lending pathos to the inarticulate brute by demonstrating a crude love and rough affection in his scenes with Lew. As Karloff had with his *Frankenstein Monster*, Walter transcends the role of murderous brute and makes of this creature a truly human monster (thus validating the film's American title – though undoubtedly not in the sense held by Monogram, the American distributor). The makeup – partially devised by Walter himself – is quite effective, with his over-large lower teeth exposed, his eyes rolled up in his head to show their whites and to remind us of his blindness, and a crop of short hair. It all adds up to create a rather simian countenance reminiscent of Fredric March's Mr. Hyde.

Hugh Williams, as Inspector Holt, appears capable, intelligent, and self-assured. He is quite likable and possesses a wry sense of humor. His crisp, no-nonsense character is still human enough to evince sympathy for Diana after her father is



killed, and British enough to be forever ordering tea.

Greta Gynt gives a very convincing, natural performance as the heroine. For instance, when she is interrupted by Orloff after discovering the incriminating note in Dearborn's office, she hurriedly gathers up her things – panic-stricken and wanting badly to escape, but knowing she mustn't bolt outright. Later, her obvious terror when cornered by Jake and her near-hysterical pleadings as Orloff drowns Lew add a realistic sense of horror to the sadistic deeds.

## Liabilities

As mentioned before, *The Dark Eyes Of London* is basically a crime-drama dressed up as a horror picture for the benefit of its star. To that end, Lugosi is not only a criminal, but a mad medico possessing ominous-looking apparatus in his upstairs "laboratory." He is given a hulking, deformed brute of an assistant whom he can send out to do his nefarious bidding. These elements aside, the film retains the crime-thriller structure and, as such, the viewer must wade through scene after scene of detectives at work trying to crack the case and discover for themselves what the audience already (at least partially) knows. Although these middle sequences are well-done and benefit from sharp pacing and a truly likable lead, the horror-minded viewer will wish for more shudder and less sleuthing. While the film succeeds admirably as a crime drama, it doesn't quite fulfill its promise in the horror department.

Continuity gaffes arise occasionally as a result of the attempted Orloff/Dearborn deception. Towards the beginning, Orloff writes a message to his henchman, Jake, and tosses it out the window to Lew, the blind violinist waiting below. Lew heads off with his note and Inspector Holt immediately arrives at Orloff's office, where the two converse for several minutes. The next scene shows Lew arriving at Dearborn's institute with Orloff's message – and Orloff is *already there* in the guise of Dearborn! Now, it's not inconceivable that Orloff could have beaten the blind man to his destination, but it is rather unlikely, especially since Orloff has to sneak in, change his clothes, apply a false wig and mustache, and then settle down before the blind messenger arrives. And why send a message through Lew which Orloff could just as easily have given to Jake directly? Of course, we don't know at the time that the two men are one and the same, but in retrospect it becomes something of a cheat to throw the audience off-track.

Since Bela Lugosi's distinctive voice and accent would have immediately given away his identity as the kindly Mr. Dearborn, his voice was dubbed by British actor O.B. Clarence. The lip-synching is quite good. Unfortunately, the effect is betrayed by a technical sound problem. Dearborn's voice has an isolated, hollow ring to it, as if coming from inside a drum (or studio sound room). Also, it is just a bit too loud compared to the other performers.

## Reviews

*Variety* (March 27, 1940) was impressed: "The *Human Monster* patently a British-made picture, is not only reminiscent of *Frankenstein*, but contains numerous horror scenes no longer permitted under the Haysian code. Additional asset is the presence of Bela Lugosi in a more villainous characterization than he's been in for some time. Film won't disappoint for theatres going in for sheer grotesque chills...Fable of a slightly deranged doctor who adopts an insurance policy racket allows for the maximum of creepy situations and brutal strangulations. The good taste of using a home for indigent blind as a hideaway and tool in the mur-



derous medico's schemes may be questioned, but without it the monster, who does the killings, would perhaps not be so plausible...Too much is made of the scenes where the blind are shown at work and the anti-climax is too heavily prolonged after the story apparently is concluded...Despite these flaws and a tendency to elaborate too much early in the vehicle, director Walter Summers has done surprisingly well to hold suspense...Lugosi acts with more relish than in recent times on the screen...Hugh Williams, as the Scotland Yard inspector, and Edmond Ryan...are competent in the chief supporting roles...Wilfred Walter, English monologist and actor, makes a realistic deformed blind man, designated as Jake, the Monster...Greta Gynt, Swedish-born actress, is superb as the innocent girl involved in the murder plot..."

The *New York Times'* B.R. Crisler (March 25, 1940), however, seemed positively aghast: "Even connoisseurs of the horror film will doubtless be constrained to admit that nothing quite so consistently horrid as *The Human Monster*...has ever befallen this hapless city. Brooded over by the bat-like spirit of Bela Lugosi, it comes like an evil visitation compared to which the hunchback of Notre Dame (first and second string); the two Doctors Jekyll and Messrs. Hyde, and both King Kong pere and fils are about as intimidating as Ferdinand the Bull." Stuffed-shirt critic Crisler quickly recovered his innate condescension, however, remarking that "all Mr. Lugosi has to do is to look at people and they either get hypnosis or cramps from laughing. Our personal reaction was more hysterical than horrified, but that's a matter of taste."

## Production Notes

*The Dark Eyes Of London* was the first English film to receive the British Censor's new "H" rating for "Horror" (which prohibited persons under sixteen years of age from seeing the film). The reactionary rating had been created in 1937, largely as a response to the 1935 Lugosi picture, *The Raven*.

Bela Lugosi's trip to England to work on this production in April of 1939 brought him close to the machinations of Hitler and the war looming upon the horizon. Returning to New York, an impassioned Lugosi told a reporter for *Az Ember* (a

New York publication for the Hungarian community): "Seeing all the horrors overseas, we have to stick to this country fanatically. Here we can live in human peace and love while over there countries disappear overnight. After what Adolf Hitler has recently done to the people of Czechoslovakia, I wonder if there is still an American of Hungarian descent who can nurture anything but hate for the Nazis. The lie about liberation has been revealed, and honest people point their fingers at Herr Hitler, the land robber and conqueror of nations."

Norwegian-born Greta Gynt began her stage and film career in England in 1934. She appeared in nearly fifty features (including James Whale's *The Road Back*, 1937) before retiring in 1964. Her one other foray into the cinema of the macabre was opposite George Sanders in *Bluebeard's Ten Honeymoons* (1960).

Wilfred Walter (1882-1958) was a stage actor and playwright who appeared in only six British films. *The Dark Eyes Of London* was his third screen appearance.

*The Dark Eyes Of London* was adapted from the book *Dead Eyes of London* by prolific English crime novelist Edgar Wallace. Between 1905 and 1930, Wallace wrote 175 novels, 17 plays, and several hundred short stories. It generally took him about nine days to dictate a novel, but on one occasion he managed to complete a book over a single weekend! According to Margaret Lane's *Edgar Wallace: The Biography Of A Phenomenon*, Wallace held no illusions as to the lasting literary merit of his works, yet he was determined that he would be remembered for his unusual storylines. His final project was to be the screenplay for *King Kong*. Unfortunately, he died of pneumonia before the production could really get under way. Wallace posthumously received co-story credit on the film.

For its U.S. release, *The Dark Eyes Of London* was retitled *The Human Monster*. The picture was later re-issued on a double bill with another British horror/mystery, *Chamber Of Horrors* (1941), which is also based on an Edgar Wallace story.

In 1961, the film was remade in West Germany as *Die Toten Augen Von London* (released in the U.S. as *Dead Eyes Of London*). Filmed in Hamburg, with the Elbe standing in for the Thames, this dull, over-long version separates the Orloff and Dearborn characters into two persons (brothers, in fact).

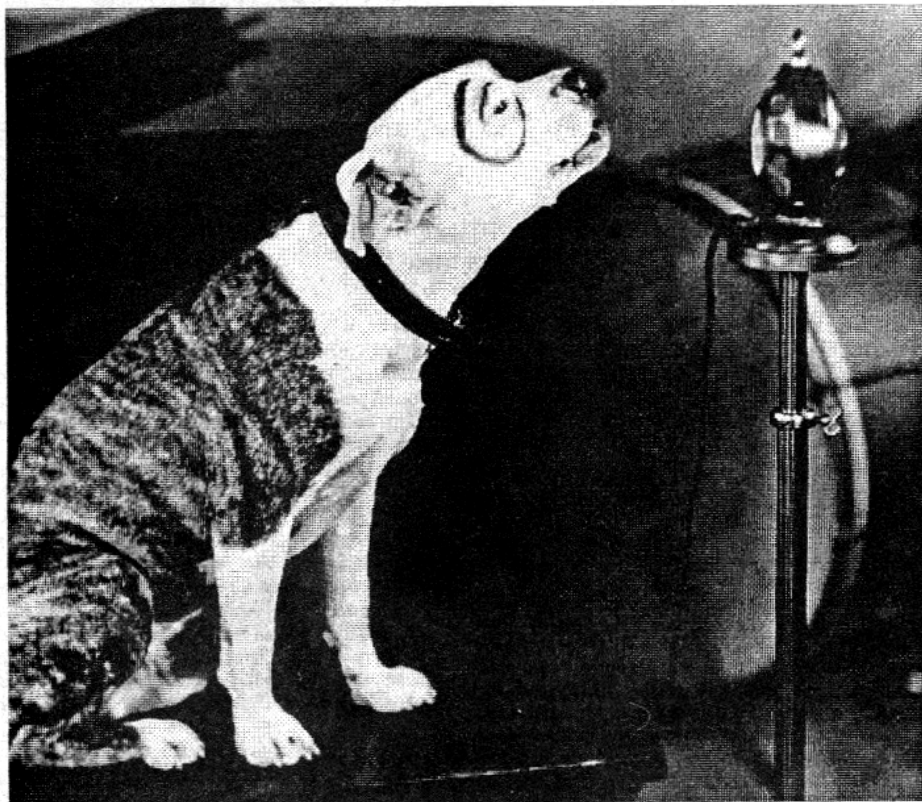




# MOVIE-TIME NEWS

## Petey The Great: The Real Kennel Murder Case

The Four Suspects:



Pete making his voice test to secure his spot in the world of talking pictures.



Kelly



Mutt



Buddy

By Marta Dobrovitz

### Flash! Murder Most Foul!

Sad and shocking news has stunned Hollywood as word got out that beloved co-star of the famous Our Gang series Pete the Pup was found dead. The evidence is not conclusive yet, but the consensus is that poison was involved. Although suspects have not yet been announced, *murder* is on the tongues of everyone. Our Gang kids have been inconsolable since the news got out. Pete's trainer, Harry Lucenay, believes someone had a grudge against him and killed the dog for revenge, although no one has been named.

Revenge, jealousy, unrequited love, murder, suicide—all are words that have been whispered in the darkest corners as possible motives for Pete's death. Could one of his peers have bumped him off in order to land the plumb role in the Our Gang shorts? (There were reports of a nasty incident on the Hal Roach lot, but nothing ever came of it, no charges were ever filed nor was an arrest ever made). Was Pete fooling around with another dog's girl? Was he cheating on his longtime love interest? Was it a freak accident in the heat of an argument or passion? Was it robbery? Or just plain suicide? Many questions have been asked, but no answers have been given. The question of suicide has been pretty much ruled out, by all concerned, since the

deceased left no note nor did he seem despondent. On the contrary, family and friends have mentioned how happy Pete was. He just landed a five year contract with Hal Roach to continue his role as "The Pup." He was also being considered for other major roles at the studio and elsewhere, he had even proposed marriage to his longtime lady love and reports were that she was very eager and willing to the idea; no, things were going far too well for him to end it all so suddenly.

No comment has been issued by the Hal Roach studios other than that everyone is very sad and despondent. And in Hollywood, as always, the show must go on, auditions will be held to replace Petey in the very near future. Police have been questioned, but they have no comment either, but suspicions are that they do have clues and suspects, but cannot reveal them at present.

Pete started out, as most dogs did, living life on the streets digging thru garbage cans for his meals. One day Harry Lucenay spotted him and felt that this dog could go places. He offered him his services as manager/trainer and told Pete that he'd never go hungry again or have to belittle himself with handouts and trash can eats. Petey accepted—what had he to lose? The first





Jiggs

stop was the stage.

Pete had his first major break in vaudeville, with the help of Lucenay. They created a revue style act for Pete—at one point he would come out wearing a straw hat (a la Chevalier) and do a little song and dance routine. This went on for a few years until one night, as is the custom, a talent scout for the Roach Studios spotted him and offered him the role that would end up making him world famous. Pete took the part mostly because he would be making more money than he ever had on the



Pete found fame on the vaudeville stage.



Pete and Harold Lloyd get friendly between takes on the set of *The Freshman*.

stage but also, because he felt he wasn't going anywhere in vaudeville, he was under-appreciated and felt that his talents were not being utilized to their full extent. Perhaps movies would be the answer. Little did Pete know that he would end up being one of the highest paid actors in the series, second only to fellow castmate Allen "Farina" Hoskins. When talkies started coming into play his voice had to be tested along with everyone else's. Tensions were high on the lot that day, but Petey came thru with flying colors.

Although Pete's life was a happy one, rumors and innuendos had plagued the actor throughout most of his career at the studio. One such rumor strewn about was one of infidelity. Names were callously bandied about by the local "rag" mags as to the identity of this alleged mistress, but, in the end, no conclusive proof was ever given as to the veracity of the allegations. Pete himself made very little comment about the subject except to say that these rumors were the ranting of a cruel and vengeful canine. A hoax in order: to break up his happy home; to ruin his career; for publicity and/or to besmirch his character and reputation. He attributed them to a jealous and/or vengeful fellow actor/tress who possibly felt that they had been cheated out of a part in films or perhaps felt that they had been left in the lurch over something in the past. Who knows the real reason? In any case, no damage was permanently done to his career. The audience stood behind their beloved Pete as did the studio.



With any and all facetiousness aside, this reader found a small note from *Photoplay* circa 1930 concerning the death of the original Pete the Pup. The dog was poisoned and it was believed to have been done by someone with a grudge against his trainer, Harry Lucenay. No suspect was ever named nor was anyone ever arrested for the crime. The Our Gang kids were inconsolable upon hearing the news. Since Lucenay had been breeding the "Pete" line, he was able to immediately substitute a similar dog after the original's death. The second Pete is obviously from the same family, but does have some differences. The circle is on the opposite eye and the ears and front legs have a slightly different coloring, but he is still considered by many as a good "Pete." However, in 1932 Lucenay was fired



The second Pete.

from the studio and along with him went the true Peteys. Afterwards, all the dogs used are considered to be bogus.

From what I've read about Petey (aka Pete, The Canine Comic), he was put into films at the age of six months, but a specific year of birth is unknown. He was fathered by Pal, The Wonder Dog—a bulldog owned by Lucenay who had also been in films and was actually the first dog to appear in Our Gang shorts regularly. (Although Pal is referred to as a bulldog—to me he looks more like a cross between a Boxer and what is now known as a Pit Bull). Pal's screen credits include: a Century Comedies short called *Mind The Baby* (1924) directed by Al Herman and produced by the Cen-

(continued)





Pete's father Pal worked for the Mack Sennett Studios in the 1920s.

tury Film Corp; and two Animal Comedies shorts — *Jerry The Giant* (1926) and *Napoleon, Jr.* (1926). These two were directed by Mark Sandrich & Lesley Selander and produced by Fox. He also appeared in 13 feature length films released from December of 1921 to October of 1927. Some highlights among these are: *Borderland* directed by Paul Powell and released by Paramount in July, 1922 to which *The Billboard* wrote, "Then there was a dog, Pal, who...seems almost human in depicting scenes of fidelity and devotion;" *The Man Next Door* directed by Victor Schertzinger &/or David Smith and released by Vitagraph in May, 1923 which had the *New York World* claiming that Pal, "...was the most remarkable dog ever seen on the screen... he does everything but talk;" and *Bobbed Hair* directed by Alan Crosland and released by Warner Bros. in October, 1925 — this one brought Pal the most accolades for his performance. The *Exhibitors Trade Review* wrote, "...The dog, Pal, contributes a wonderful performance;" the *Los Angeles Times* noted that, "Pal's scenes with Louise Fazenda are unquestionably the funniest in the picture... who ever wrote the dog's part into the story improved it 100 per cent;" and *Variety* stated, "One of the best actors in the picture, however, is Pal...who goes flying through the chase with Miss Fazenda. The dog proves a great comedy foil." It's clear to see that Petey came from great stock. With a pop like Pal how could Pete be anything less than brilliant himself?

In the 1924 movie *Western Vengeance*, a cast list includes "Pete (himself, a dog)." I presume that this is the Pete since I cannot find any stills; however, a review from '24 lists a dog in the film as a

Boston Terrier which is nowhere near a Pit Bull, but this could be a misidentification on the part of the reviewer, especially if Pete was a lot smaller at the time. It also mentions that the dog is the best thing in an otherwise rotten film — leaving me to believe that it is Petey. On July 12, 1925 Roach-Pathe released a one-reeler comedy entitled *Yes, Yes, Nanette* directed by Stan Laurel & Clarence Hennecke. The cast includes Jimmie Finlayson, Oliver "Babe" Hardy and Pete. Pete has a fairly large part in it too. At one point he steals Finlayson's toupee and proceeds to wear it himself. One of his better known films, though, is *The Freshman*, released on September 20, 1925, where he plays "Mike the Mascot." He has a comedic role opposite Harold Lloyd during a football training scene. Petey also appeared in *Dynamite Doggie*, a short starring Al St. John, released in August (?) of 1925.

Later, he landed the role of Tige in the Buster Brown Comedies shorts — it is unclear precisely when Pete started this role. The four Buster Brown shorts I found listed were made by the Stern Brothers Prod., directed by Gus Meins and stars Arthur Trimble & Doreen Turner. Unfortunately, the cast lists for these do not include Pete. He may have been in all of them or just a few, but in any case here are the titles in the order made: *Buster's Nose Dive* (1926); *Buster's Girl Friend* (1927); *Buster, What's Next* (1927); and *Look Out — Buster!* (1927). It was the role of Tige which has been attributed to Pete acquiring the famous ring around his eye. (The accuracy of this bit of history is a little dubious since Pete already had the ring during *Yes, Yes, Nanette*, which was made a year earlier than the first Buster Browns I found listed). The ring was

made with a permanent dye, so when Hal Roach picked Pete out for his *Our Gang* role Roach had no other choice than to accept the dog as is.

1927 was a big year for Pete. After the Buster shorts, he landed a starring role in three Hot Dog Cartoon shorts: *The Lunch Hound*, *Puppy Express* and *Romeoing*. These were produced by the Bray Co. — the first two were directed by Walter Lantz & Clyde Geronimi and the last one was directed by Lantz & Bray, Jr. But Pete's biggest success for '27 came when Hal Roach signed him to a three-year contract which also included six month options. His starting salary was to be \$125 per week which would be raised by increments of \$25 during the life of the contract, not exceeding a limit of \$225. He also made an additional \$25 per week to make him exclusive to the Roach Studios, thus making Pete truly the second highest paid actor in the *Our Gang* series. Pete's final appearance is in the short *A Tough Winter* released on June 21, 1930.

The first glimpse of the new Pete is in the short, *Pups Is Pups*, released on August 30, 1930. He is one of several puppies that belong to "Wheezier." It is not difficult to pick out baby Pete (he is only three months old here) since he is the only pup with a ring around his eye. It was towards *School's Out*, released on November 22, 1930, that Pete #2 began to take over the role left vacant by Pete #1, although he was still pretty young and not quite up to snuff in the part yet.

The second Pete ended up staying at the Roach Studios for only two years because of Lucenay's termination. The last short Pete made for *Our Gang* (this referring, of course, to the true Pete clan and not to any subsequent "Petes") is *The Pooch* released June 11, 1932. After leaving the studio Pete went to New York and in 1933 appeared in the Roscoe "Fatty" Arbuckle short *Buzzin' Around* (the end of the short has Pete & Arbuckle riding in a bathtub sidcar. Look for a small blooper as Petey is joyfully oblivious to Arbuckle's motion to shake his "hand" resulting in Arbuckle finally grabbing the dog's paw). He remained in New York and in 1934 appeared in Paramount's *Broadway Highlights* news reel. Pete is seen drinking a mug of beer as his initiation into The Lambs Club. In 1936 he, once again, joined *Our Gang*, but only for a personal appearance tour.

The (original) Pete the Pup murder case lives on in the annals alongside other notable Hollywood whodunnits such as the William Desmond Taylor and the Thelma Todd "murder" cases. These cases were from the '20s and '30s (respectively) and were individually "solved" in recent years in the books *A Cast Of Killers* and *Hot Toddy* — food for thought. ■



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# Fred Olen Ray On Dinosaur Island & Possessed By The Night

Interviewed by  
Brad Linaweaver

**Cult Movies:** What can you tell us about *Dinosaur Island*?

**Fred Olen Ray:** *Dinosaur Island* is a collaboration between myself and Jim Wynorski which is a picture slated for release by Concorde/New Horizons. They had a certain amount of input into the film; Roger Corman had his own ideas about the way things should be. The film originally started out as sort of a 1940s thing with World War II soldiers as opposed to modern day, but Roger thought modern day would be better – and they wanted it a little more comical than we had originally anticipated – with a *Stripes* kind of feeling, and a Bill Murray kind of character, a John Candy kind of character... All these characters in *Dinosaur Island* are pretty much the Roger Corman influence.

**CM:** Considering your usual bevy of sexy actresses, does this picture owe more to something like *When Dinosaurs Ruled The Earth* than being part of the *Jurassic Park* craze?

**FOR:** Other than the fact it has dinosaurs, there is no relation to *Jurassic Park*. It has a lot more to do with *The Lost Continent* or *Untamed Women*, or one of those movies. *Dinosaur Island* takes the *One Million B.C.* type movie to its limit. It's probably the first mainstream dinosaur film that lets cave girls be natural... as they were intended to be. It's going to be the dinosaur movie that every kid wished he'd seen when he was fourteen years old back in the sixties.

**CM:** Yeah, I'd always wanted *One Million Years B.C.* and *When Dinosaurs Ruled The Earth* to be R rated.

**FOR:** Every time you wished Raquel Welch's or Martine Beswick's top would pop off and it didn't, well, now it does!

**CM:** Any members of the cast you want to mention in particular?

**FOR:** Ross Hagen is in it. I've done a lot of pictures with Ross. He's fought dinosaurs for me before in *Phantom Empire*; and there's Richard Gabai, who starred in *Assault Of The Party Nerds* and *Virgin High*. And, of course, there's Michelle Bauer, who is no mystery woman to people who like this kind of film! Becky Le Beau is in it. Toni Naples is the Queen.

The cast was split between Jim Wynorski people and Fred Olen Ray people; and it's a blend of people who had worked for both of us. Richard Gabai had not worked for me before. I brought in Ross Hagen and Steve Barkett and Michelle Bauer. Jim brought in Peter Spellos. Everyone performed ably.





CM: How did you do the monsters?

FOR: The first thing people will think when they see this is that we grabbed stuff from *Carnosaur* which is not true. Roger would pay for the use of the *Carnosaur* dinosaurs in new scenes. Any other dinosaurs we wanted we had to provide ourselves; and we wanted a lot more dinosaurs than were in *Carnosaur*. So we did some stop motion. The main thing is that the dinosaur work, even the stuff using the *Carnosaur* dinosaurs, is all original. You can tell, because our people are in the shots. We didn't just go in and lift shots out of *Carnosaur*. We used all the dinosaurs to the best effect that was available to us.

I think the picture turned out just great. There's a Bernard Herrmannesque score – very *Mysterious Island* – done by Chuck Cirino who manages to capture it just right. This is a humorous film. It's

**'Dinosaur Island takes the One Million B.C. type movie to its limit. It's probably the first mainstream dinosaur film that lets cave girls be natural... as they were intended to be. It's going to be the dinosaur movie that every kid wished he'd seen when he was fourteen years old back in the sixties.'**

not a serious film and I don't think that with the budget that we had that I would want to attempt a serious dinosaur picture. But within the limitations of army GI's and young maidens battling dinosaurs on a lost island, I think this one just about covers all the bases.

CM: What was the name of those comic books where the soldiers ran into dinosaurs every issue?

FOR: *Star Spangled War Stories*. Jim and I are both big fans of the Suicide Patrol that fought dinosaurs every month. We use everything from our childhoods. Everything you prayed for when you watched women-in-skins movies is in this one. Everything you ever wanted to see as a kid is right there on the screen!

CM: You've recently finished another movie with a monster, *Dark Is The Night*.

FOR: *Dark Is The Night* has been retitled. It is now *Possessed By The Night*. (The project started as the script, *The Unliving*.) It's one of those erotic thrillers but it has a horror angle unlike the earlier ones I've done. It utilizes the freak show/sideshow part of my life, inasmuch as the culprit is an exhibit from a carnival in a jar. But it's still alive and it causes people to go crazy and commit murder. So the film does have a monster, although most of the story is psychological. It stars Shannon Tweed, Sandahl Bergman, Henry Silva and Chad McQueen. It's the first movie made by Turhan Bey in his return to Hollywood, his first in forty years.

After I put Turhan in this film they were able to use that to catapult him into another movie and the *Sea Quest* television series. I look at *The Today Show*, and NBC is taking credit for rediscovering Turhan Bey! I want to go on record right now that if anybody rediscovered him – if he needed rediscovering – it was me. It's the same thing when they said David Lynch rediscovered Russ Tamblyn. If anybody rediscovered him, it was me. I used Russ in four or five movies prior to his appearing in *Twin Peaks*.

CM: He's always been good in horror and weird material, such as *The Haunting*.

FOR: Every once in a while someone will come along and I'll use them. Then they'll get something big and people forget exactly how this comes about. And while Turhan Bey certainly didn't



need my help in the movie business, I would like to go on record that we were the first ones to engage him – and the other jobs sprang from that.

CM: Looking back at some of your earliest work, was Buster Crabbe on the TV *Buck Rogers* before or after he starred in your *It Fell From The Sky* (Alien Dead)?

FOR: After.

CM: Which means you've been doing this from the start!

FOR: To my knowledge he hadn't been doing anything in eons before that. Recently we did a picture with Telly Savalas, *Mindtwister*; and if I'm not mistaken, he had not been in a picture in five years when I hired him. And as soon as I'd hired him on that film, the next thing you know Telly has made three pictures in the twelve months that followed that and was on *The Commish* TV show as a semi-regular character. He doesn't need me to rediscover him. It just seems to have worked out that way.

CM: Who wrote *Possessed By The Night*?

FOR: Mark McGee.

CM: Is he a fan of Ray Bradbury's *The Jar*?

FOR: There was some concern that this is not a totally new idea; but it's not the case that we were influenced by that story. There have been stories before about a thing in a jar and nobody knows what it is. The only concern is that I didn't want to be seen as ripping off Ray Bradbury or anybody else. As a sideshow entrepreneur I have plenty of real things in jars! This is something I really wanted to do and I didn't think that Bradbury's story was going to help or hurt me. They don't have anything to do with each other.

CM: Do you think this is one of your strongest horror movies, or should I say erotic suspense thrillers?

FOR: It wasn't meant to be a real terrifying picture – just sort of gently queasy or creepy. By the way, in one of the rewrites the thing became a





statue; then it went back to being the thing in the jar again, which is what I really wanted to do. Of course, it wasn't meant to be sold as a horror film; it's meant to be sold as an erotic thriller. I'm just sick to death of erotic thrillers and I wanted a little horror in there to make it more fun for me. That's how it worked out.

Following that then, when we did *Inner Sanctum 2*, the sequel to the other picture that was so successful, I insisted on a horror theme in that, as well. So it's horrific compared to the first picture. But it will be sold as an erotic thriller. The bottom line is that I needed some horror in there to keep my interest up.

CM: Who is releasing this one?

FOR: Vision is releasing both *Possessed By The Night* and *Inner Sanctum 2* through Columbia/TriStar.

CM: Any upcoming projects you'd like to mention?

FOR: We are doing *Bio Hazard 2* in Florida with Chris Mitchum. *Dark Universe* will be coming out on video. *Stepmonster* is playing on the Disney Channel.

CM: Thanks, Fred.



## Coming Next Issue:



- Criswell's Latest Predictions
- Valda Hansen's Last Interview
- Fred Olen Ray Reflects on Ed Wood
- Many More Features on Ed Wood
- Bela Lugosi's Stage Career by Frank J. Dello Stritto
- Greg Mank on The Morbid Year of 1937.
- Interview with Takao Okawara, the director of *Godzilla Vs. Mothra* (1992) and *Godzilla Vs. Mechagodzilla* (1993).
- Interview with Kenpachiro Satsuma, actor who has played Godzilla since *Godzilla 1985*.
- Toho's Mutant Films, Dave Milner's scrapbook article covering *Half Human*, *Latitude Zero*, *The Human Vapor*, and others.
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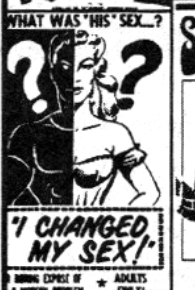
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## "...To Make God Laugh"

In this issue of *Cult Movies*, Lisa Mitchell delves into the vault of time and finds an article written in 1978 on the great Mel Brooks. Lisa wrote "...To Make God Laugh..." on spec for the Los Angeles Times where she was a resident critic in their *Book Review* section. Though filled with intriguing quotes and insights, the article was never printed. We are proud to be presenting it for the first time, sixteen years later.

My birthday in the spring of 1968 may or may not have begun on a white-grey day with a cold drizzle, but that's the way I remember it because I was breaking up with my boyfriend and he had promised to spend my birthday with me, then didn't. So my best girlfriend said she'd take me anywhere I wanted to go; do anything; would anything help? I chose to see *The Producers*, the first movie Mel Brooks ever made.

Brooks, I recalled, had given me some joy on his records as "The 2,000 Year-Old Man" and by co-creating the *Get Smart* television series. I knew, too, that he had been one of the writers on *Your Show Of Shows*, the innovative comedy program from t.v.'s golden days - 90 minutes of live broadcasting - that I watched every week as a little girl in the early '50s. Somehow, if anything could save the day, I suspected that material out of Mel Brooks' mind might do it.

I watched a timid Gene Wilder get wooed into taking a chance on life by Zero Mostel. I saw him go from nebbish to mensch and a fountain gushed straight up, high in the air. I heard a song in a Busby Berkeley-esque production number, "Springtime for Hitler and Germany. Winter for Poland and France...Come on, Germans, go into your dance!" Like the rain that day, I cannot be sure if those scenes or that movie actually had anything to do with the lessening of my depression, or if I really did walk out of the theatre knowing I would be all right again, but that's how I seem to remember it.

When Dostoevsky wrote, "One sacred memory from childhood is perhaps the best education," he could have been telling us a lot about Mel Brooks. And while those lines may be true of all of us, the visible effects of the theory are often most entertaining when applied to filmmakers, wearing their hearts on the most obvious sleeve of the century, the big screen.

And Mel Brooks could probably tell us a lot about Dostoevsky, too, for that matter. He's Mel's favorite among the also revered Tolstoy, Gogol and Turgenev - for Brooks has long been enamored of and profoundly influenced by the Russian masters. Certainly Brooks would be the first to agree that the ghosts of his own formative years are the motivating forces behind the cathartic comedy he creates.

"I needed to make people laugh," Brooks says, "to recapture the attention I got as a baby and to compensate for being poor, short and Jewish." Like many true comedy artists, he seeks to build present laughter out of past pains. From his pen, armed with a camera, he shoots down his fears, channels his angers, subdues his hysteria, slays his adversaries. Through parodies and satires, he both punctures pomposity and hypocrisy and pays tribute to his childhood filmic heroes.

Perhaps nowhere in his ten year movie career is all of this more cumulatively evident than in his sixth and latest picture, *High Anxiety*, where his heart's blood is on every frame. Not only is he producer, director, co-writer and star of the film, he also sings (amazingly like Frank Sinatra) the title song to which he wrote the words and music.

*High Anxiety* is Brooks' paean to Alfred Hitchcock. "Specifically, it's the sharp, angular Hitchcock of the '50s and early '60s that I'm saluting," says Brooks. "I think he is absolutely the greatest director that ever lived. He always made a movie movie. Ever since I was a little boy, I just trusted that I was going to be excited



and entertained when I saw an Alfred Hitchcock picture."

Brooks, once nicknamed "The Monkey" because of his perpetual crackling energy, speaks quietly now from a deep white couch in his spacious white inner office, brilliant with sunlight, at 20th Century Fox Studios. For all its size, it is a comfortable room, easy, unpretentious, with no mark of a decorator's hand. On the walls, simply framed posters from Brooks' movies. On a book-laden table, the old, red edition of a very worn Roget's Thesaurus, long faded to pale pink. Brooks wears crisp white slacks, a fresh white polo shirt, clean white sneakers.

"Hitchcock's pictures are microcosms of a much larger philosophy, which is this: we don't know why we're here, why we're born, why we live and why we die. Whether it's Nietzsche or Schopenhauer or Dewey who tried to explain it, we don't get a good explanation of it all. And Hitchcock does the same thing in his pictures. The hero never knows why he's thrown in the flux. Why he got in that vortex in which he suddenly finds himself, but he does survive. Univer-



sally, we - all of us - don't know why we're alive, but we survive. Philosophically, that always appeals to me."

In *High Anxiety*, the vortex into which Brooks, as the dapper and erudite Dr. Richard Thorndyke, finds himself thrown, is a series of bizarre intrigues which begins at the Psycho-Neurotic Institute For The Very Very Nervous, where he has arrived to replace the former director, who mysteriously died. Thorndyke is a sweet intellectual innocent, a Nobel Prize winning, *phi beta kappa* Harvard psychiatrist - with a fear of heights - for Hitchcock heroes have A Flaw which they must overcome.

Nemesis lurks at every suspense-filled turn as an odd couple made up of the villainous Dr. Charles Montague (Harvey Korman), who runs the hospital, and the oh-so-strict Nurse Charlotte Diesel (Cloris Leachman), who runs Montague. ("Harvey makes such a perfect villain because he's tall. Since I'm short, I always make the bad guys tall and the good guys short in all my movies.")

Out of nowhere comes Victoria Brisbane (Madeline Kahn), as the typical blonde Hitchcock heroine, who bursts into Thorndyke's life to involve him with her own. Thorndyke, in epiphanal Hitchcock fashion, will conquer his high anxiety when he is forced into an act of heroism, but not before he suffers everything from chronic attacks of bewilderment to bombardments of bird droppings.

Mel Brooks himself is a perfect Hitchcock hero, for he has overcome.

Many years before he ever dreamed of creating this "psycho-comedy," Brooks was a victim of a very real psychic illness termed "anxiety hysteria," which he says today, "was also a fear of heights. Only my kind of high anxiety was about rising to an elevated place in my life, in terms of success. I couldn't sleep. I couldn't breathe. I'd run through the streets. I threw up a lot and got dizzy spells. I'd be nauseated for days."

These symptoms began appearing when Brooks, who had been poor all his life, first started climbing financially as a comedy writer for Sid Caesar. Even though, at the subconscious level, he was tormented by fear of success, on the surface, he was very competitive about creating the funniest material possible. Among his cohorts on Caesar's high-powered, brilliant staff was one of the lushest seedbeds extant for flourishing comic artistry, and one whose fruits have been increasingly abundant. In addition to Caesar, Carl Reiner and Howard Morris, Brooks could play joking jousts of one-upmanship with such fellow writers and Neil Simon and Woody Allen. "I had to get in the ultimate punch line...the cosmic joke," Brooks has said. "It was as though I was screaming at the universe to pay attention. Like I had to make God laugh."

Through psychoanalysis, he learned to channel those cries for attention creatively. He began to understand that his fear of success was really an apprehension about becoming an adult, accepting responsibility, and - in a primitive way - it was a fear of death. "You know, becoming a man, a person. Growing up, growing old, you could die. My father died when I was two and a half."

Brooks, who overcame by spending four days a week for six years on an analyst's couch, has called psychoanalysis "...the most sensible examination of our psychological traumas." So, in *High Anxiety*, he is also tenderly spoofing neuroses and psychiatry - as well as paying homage to the cinema of Alfred Hitchcock.

"Actually, I wasn't even ready to have made a picture like this before. I wasn't the filmmaker yet to tackle it. I felt I had to get enough technical knowledge under my belt before I could climb this moun-



tain. Because, if you're going to do Hitchcock, you have to do it as well as Hitchcock. The shots – the backlighting, the shadows, the angles, where the camera goes and how it's used – have to be that good. You have to capture the concepts on film as well as Hitchcock, or you'll fall way short of the mark."

Where he put the camera and how he used it is only one aspect of what makes *High Anxiety* awash with the Hitchcockian senses and colors that seep into the film's pores. Brooks' attention to every detail is that of a meticulous artisan. For marathon days, he sat at the piano bench next to his longtime composer-director, John Morris, then stood with him on the scoring stage as they built, note upon note, the background music evocative of a tense and gripping Bernard Herrman score. For weeks in, months out, he hovered cheek by jowl with longtime film editor, John Howard, cutting the picture, sometimes during which he claims his blood sugar went awry and he had the tendency to scream.

"Each frame is a little sprocketed tile of emotion in a vast mosaic called a movie, and each frame has its own integrity." The hardest part of editing for him is "hacking out whole scenes that were your special babies, so the movie won't run too long. A comedy movie should never be more than 90 minutes. By then, the audience's Raisinettes are used up. There's nothing else to life for. At studio screenings, you can always tell when the audience is getting bored because they start lighting up cigarettes. If they're very bored, all those little sparks in the darkened theatre can make it look like Dresden after the R.A.F. got through with it."

Apparently, he feels as though enough of his "special babies" lived to make it through to the final film, for he speaks animatedly about his favorite "in" jokes that were designed to make dyed-in-the-wool fans of Hitchcockiana nudge one another with glee before falling on the floor.

"One of them is 'The MacGuffin.' It's a Sottish word meaning a MacThing, a MacGimmick, so it was always Hitchcock's nickname for whatever gimmick his plots turned on. You know, like the secret plans in *The 39 Steps* or the wine bottle filled with uranium in *Notorious*. The thing they were after. The MacGuffin. So – we've got a scene where Thorndyke checks in to the Hyatt Regency Hotel in San Francisco. Because of his high anxiety, he had specifically reserved a room on a low floor, but the desk clerk (Jack Riley) says he has to put him way, way up on the 17th floor – because – he had received a call 'from a Mister MacGuffin' to move him.

"But one of the best 'in' jokes for me – the big thing that I really adore – is when Thorndyke and Brophy (played by Ron Carey, another short beauty, who actually introduces himself to Thorndyke as 'your driver and sidekick') are driving along the highway. Suddenly, there's this music they hear in the car. Now, nobody's turned a radio on and the music gets very loud and then louder and louder. It's crazy, this being assaulted by music from nowhere, the way that that happens in movies. It's all cleared up when a big bus passes them, carrying the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra, rehearsing – a very Hitchcockian *North By Northwest* highly strung kind of theme.

"Then there's a scene we shot under the Golden Gate Bridge that's practically the very spot where Kim Novak jumped into the water in *Vertigo*. We've also got our comedic versions of scenes from *The Birds* and from *Psycho* – particularly the famous shower scene – where I get attacked with a wet newspaper by a vicious bellboy in my bathroom at the hotel."

When Brooks told Mister Hitchcock himself "that *High Anxiety* would be a 'sendup' of some of his pictures, he said it was fine. He wasn't that guarded or precious about his work." Although Brooks had been "a student, admirer and total worshipper" of Hitchcock all his life, he had never actually met the master until just last year, prior to beginning *Anxiety*.

"My wife and I had to good fortune to have dinner with him and his wife, Alma," Brooks glows. "The most stunning and surprising thing about him was how very emotional, very warm he was. That came through right away. He's very dear. Blushed at a

compliment, and almost melted if he felt your words were sincere and heartfelt. A darling man! These people were sensationally interesting. They had great and simple things to tell us. And we sat like two little kids around a campfire, listening to wise old Indians tell us stories of the prairies. It was one of the most wonderful evenings of our lives!"

In addition to spellbinding talkabout films, Brooks' second favorite subject – wine – was also shared. The reality of such a splendid meeting with his hero proved better than even he could have imagined it, back in the darkened Brooklyn movie theatres of his boyhood, through all the years of all those Saturday matinees watching *The 39 Steps* and *The Lady Vanishes*. If one sacred memory from childhood is indeed the best education, Mel Brooks must have felt as though he received some special kind of diploma that night.

Melvin Kaminsky was born fifty-one and a half years ago in Brooklyn. The youngest among four sons of Russian-Jewish immigrants. His mother worked night and day to support and raise her boys after his father's death when Melvin was a baby. He began making the other kids laugh at school, at the camp he attended for underprivileged children, out on the streets, down on the corner. By 14, he was trying to do the same thing for the clientele at Jewish resorts when he was a pool boy up in the Catskill Mountains. Eventually, he changed his name, became a Borscht Belt singer/drummer, then a stand-up comic. In New York, while writing the Caesar Shows (*The Admiral Broadway Revue*, *Your Show Of Shows* and *Caesar's Hour*) over several years, he married, had three children, divorced. When Caesar went off the air, Brooks sunk into a financial and creative abyss from which he didn't emerge until "The 2,000 Year-Old Man" and *Get Smart* put him back on his feet. He married Academy Award winning actress, Anne Bancroft in 1964, whom he had met three years earlier and to whom he is still married.

His first two movies, *The Producers* and *The Twelve Chairs*, were "special little pictures," that got a loyal cult following but failed at the box office. Although they dealt with such universal themes as love and greed, Brooks said the films were not identifiable enough for the masses. Then, almost "in anger, really," and harnessing that anger to work for him, Brooks made his next picture, *Blazing Saddles*, loaded with a vengeance of western clichés. Take that! That's familiar! He seemed to be saying. Cowboys, Indians, lynch mobs, campfires, horses. That you'll recognize, you who didn't know from "two Jews on Broadway!" That you'll understand, you who didn't get the Russian sensibility of 1917! And *Blazing Saddles* then became "a torch to light the way," as its theme song said, for Brooks' filmmaking future. "It cut across every regional barrier" and was responsible for a three-picture deal with 20th Century Fox which let Brooks make *Young Frankenstein*, *Silent Movie* and *High Anxiety*.

Brooks says, "At first my audience had been mostly college kids. Then it broadened to high school students and dentist. At last I got dentists. And then, with *Blazing Saddles*, I finally, finally conquered John Wayne Country, or else I couldn't have big hits. That audience will keep growing and *High Anxiety* will help it more.

"*High Anxiety* is this wild combination. It's like my other 'genre' film, *Young Frankenstein*, because of the cinematic aspects: backlighting, shadows, angles. Stark cinema. And then it had these sensational bursts of vulgar truths, like in *Blazing Saddles*, with its pratfalls and Rabelaisian delights. It's very different from the artless, innocent *Silent Movie*. In *Anxiety* we knew what we were doing. We were diamond cutters out to cut quite a diamond here. If we were bananas, it was with malice aforethought. It was directed. We didn't try to improvise."

"Mel is totally disciplined," says Howard Morris, Brooks' friend of 30 years, who plays a Viennese psychiatrist, Professor Lillolman, in the film. "And he demands it of everyone else – rightfully. But he demands it with comprehension, compassion and hu-

mor."

Other members of the cast and crew continually praised Brooks' capacity to "take incredible responsibility" and seemed awed by how thoroughly "he knows what he's doing." For times have changed. The days of relating anecdotes about Brooks as "the wild man" are all but vanished. The old tales about "the maniac" who once jumped on tables in the middle of serious board meetings are subsumed by respect for "Midas Brooks'" professional acumen and for how "amazingly bright and intelligent he really is." These days, the private Brooks is more apt to be lauded as a well-read, incredibly informed man, acquainted with vastly diversified subjects, with all the knowledge distilled through a humor far more cerebral than his screen image suggests.

A sharp observer of the human situation, he has been called a "standup philosopher," and is a man who seasons his speech with rich metaphors and pungent similes. Perhaps one day, future generations will even look back at him nostalgically as the Jewish Robert Benchley, repeating his bon mots at cocktail parties, probably misquoting him.

"He seems to be really coming into a great point in his life," Madeline Kahn remarks. "He's rather like a Camembert cheese. Or a vintage wine at just the right temperature."

The term, *auteur* has generally been associated with the writer/directors of dramatic, rather than comedic films. But someone like Woody Allen, whom Brooks calls "a very astute filmmaker and a true *auteur*," and certainly Brooks, with his total involvement in every phase of his pictures, are no less deserving of the *auteur* title than are Orson Welles or Ingmar Bergman. And like his serious confreres, Brooks, too has maintained sort of a "stock company." He delights in working with a family of actors like Gene Wilder, Marty Feldman, Dom De Luise, Madeline Kahn, Ron Carey, Harvey Korman and Cloris Leachman over and over again. "I want to make a nest for all those baby birds to sleep in," he says. He has also been quick to help member of his flock to try out their own wings as fledgling *auteurs*, and like an Old Testament patriarch, Brooks hath begat Gene Wilder and Marty Feldman. (When Wilder's and Feldman's pictures are reviewed, Brooks' name is invariably mentioned, the way a university is cited as a doctor's or lawyer's alma mater.)

Brooks, who encourages new comedy filmmakers whenever and however he can, says, "What I hope and pray for is a *climate* of film comedy so more people will be going to more comedies all the time. Good film comedy is so important! I'm a big Woody Allen fan, but he and I are screaming for other people to make comedy movies, too. If it's just down to Woody and myself, it's going to be very tough to hold our own end of it up all by ourselves. Like in all film cycles, we need help. It's a relay race, handing over the stick, the eternal flame of comedy, given to us by that good old hysterical, Aristophanes, or side-splitting Euripides or the belly man, Plautus. They laid down some good laws of comedy."

This is not to say that Brooks doesn't envision a healthy comedy future, for in addition to his own "baby birds," he is greatly encouraged by such comedy makers as The Not Ready For Prime Tim Players and Monty Python. And for his own immediate comedy future, he's "toying with the idea" of another genre film: the typical World War II, buddies-on-the-battlefield kind of movie – with the battles staged and photographed like in a Busby Berkeley musical. "Or else," he adds, "maybe I'll do something completely different."

Now that *High Anxiety* has exorcised the last vestiges of his own past acrophobia; now that he has dined with Hitchcock, finally conquered John Wayne Country and watched the Brooks' garden grow verdant with his "big hits" all prettily lined in a row, the future looks bright enough in any event. He can have faith. He knows that wonderful things can and do happen and that God must be good, for Mel Brooks by now, surely, has heard Him laugh.



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### SCIENCE FICTION

**UNNATURAL** (1952) Eric Von Stroheim, Hildegard Neft. A fascinating story of a brilliant, yet evil scientist who creates a femme fatale via artificial insemination. From 35mm. 1/15/94 S131

**BELA LUGOSI MEETS A BROOKLYN GORILLA** (1953) Bela Lugosi, Duke Mitchell, Sammy Petrillo. One of the great 'baddies' of all time with Bela turning people into gorillas. Upgraded from a nice 16mm original. 5/16/93 L030

**BEYOND THE CURTAIN OF SPACE** (1953, aka **BEYOND THE MOON**) Richard Crane, Robert Lyden, Scotty Beckett. The first Rocky Jones and the Space Rangers adventure. Upgraded from a good looking 16mm original. 12/17/93 S025

**DEVIL GIRL FROM MARS** (1954) Hazel Court, Hugh McDermott. A ruthless female alien and her giant robot land in the English countryside, terrorizing the local citizenry. From a stunning 16mm original print. 7/1/93 S033

**BRIDE OF THE MONSTER** (1955) Bela Lugosi, Tor Johnson. Directed by Ed Wood. One of the great 'baddies' of all time. Bela's a mad scientist conducting atomic experiments in a spooky old house by a swamp that harbors a monster octopus. From a stunning 35mm print. 1/25/94 S038

**GIANT FROM THE UNKNOWN** (1957) Ed Kemmer, Morris Ankrum, Bob Steele. A scientific expedition stumbles upon a giant, perfectly preserved conquistador who's brought back to life by a bolt of lightning. Upgraded from 16mm with a nice clean audio track. 12/18/93 S050

**QUATERMASS 2** (1957) Brain Donlevy, Sidney James. A space scientist stumbles upon a secret plant in the English countryside that's filled with invading aliens. A classic. Upgraded from an original 35mm print. 9/1/93 S132

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**AMAZING TRANSPARENT MAN** (1959) Douglas Kennedy, Marguerite Chapman. A madman uses an atomic invisibility device to turn a gangster into a transparent uranium thief. Great drive-in fun! Upgraded from a gorgeous 16mm original. 1/15/94 S056

**MISSILE TO THE MOON** (1959) Richard Travis, Gary Clarke. Two teenage hoodlums stowaway aboard a rocket, bound for the moon! From a beautiful, uncut 35mm print. 7/8/93 S105

### "TEENAGERS FROM OUTER SPACE"

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**TEENAGERS FROM OUTER SPACE** (1959) David Love, Dawn Anderson. A flying saucer filled with ray gun wielding teenage aliens lets loose a giant, lobster-like monster upon the Earth. From a stunning 16mm original print. 1/13/92 S052

**THE HEAD** (1959) Horst Frank, Michel Simon. A must see obscenity! A serum which keeps severed portions of the human body alive is used by a mad doctor on its own inventors decapitated head. 12/15/93 S057

**THE WASP WOMAN** (1959) Susan Cabot, Barboura Morris. A Roger Corman goodie. An eccentric scientist turns the head of a cosmetics firm into a murdering, wasp-like monster. From a mint 16mm original print. 9/3/93 S051

**LAST WOMAN ON EARTH** (1960) Anthony Carbone, Betsy Jones Moreland. Roger Corman's sci-fi drama about the three surviving members of a world holocaust. Recently upgraded from a 35mm color print. 10/1/93 S062

### CAPTIVES OF A POWER... FAR, FAR OUT!



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**THE PHANTOM PLANET** (1961) Dean Fredericks, Coleen Gray. A real enjoyable and very underrated sci-fi 'B' opus about an astronaut who's stranded on an invisible planetoid, threatened by a fleet of marauding alien monsters. From a nice 16mm original print. 12/30/93 S065

**ASSIGNMENT OUTER SPACE** (1962) Rick Von Nutter, Archie Savage. An atmospheric space opera about a runaway space station who's force field threatens to destroy the earth. In color from a nice 16mm original print. 5/1/93 S073

**THE EYE CREATURES** (1965) John Ashley, Cynthia Hull. Invading aliens match wits with a group of 'smarter than the local authorities' teenagers who outwit the monsters and send them packing by movie's end. Upgraded from a nice color, 16mm print. 12/28/93 S085

**VOYAGE TO THE PREHISTORIC PLANET** (1965) Basil Rathbone, Faith Domergue. The story of man's first expedition to Venus and the monstrous perils he faces there. Upgraded from 16mm. 12/30/93 S086

**FIRST SPACESHIP ON VENUS** (1963) Gunther Simon, Kurt Rackelmann. An international space expedition lands on Venus to find the planet completely destroyed by nuclear war. Upgraded from a nice color, 16mm original print. 12/30/94 S080

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### HORROR

**VAMPIRE** (1932) Julian West, Harriet Gerrard. The use of light, shadow, and camera angles are translated into a pureness of horror in this classic vampire-in-a-castle tale. Not actually an upgrade, but a new release of the 65 minute English subtitled version which was previously unavailable. H198

**JUGGERNAUT** (1936) Boris Karloff, Joan Wyndham. Boris plots with a greedy woman to slowly poison her rich husband. Much better definition and overall video quality in this beautiful upgrade from 16mm. 1/15/94 K002

**FACE AT THE WINDOW** (1939) Tod Slaughter, John Warwick. If you've never seen a Slaughter film, this is the one to start with. There's a monster, a mad killer, and a crazed scientist experimenting with reanimation. From 16mm. 1/15/94 TS07

**BLUEBEARD** (1944) John Carradine, Jean Parker. Probably Carradine's best performance in a horror film as he plays a mad killer on the loose in Paris. Upgraded from a nice, original 16mm print. 12/15/93 C003

**AMAZING MR. X** (1948) Turhan Bey, Lynn Bari. A highly underrated, atmospheric chiller about a phony mystic and the ghost of a woman's dead husband. From a beautiful 16mm print. 1/15/94 H029

**VAMPIRE OVER LONDON** (1951) Bela Lugosi, Arthur Lucan. Kind of a dopey British comedy, but definitely one of Bela's best performances. Upgraded from a nice 16mm original. 1/30/94 L029

**DEVIL'S PARTNER** (1958) Ed Nelson, Richard Crane, Edgar Buchanan. A nifty and very under appreciated little 'B' shocker about a dry, dusty southwest town that's prey to witchcraft and murder. Upgraded from a stunning 16mm original print. 12/30/93 H038

**HORROR CHAMBER OF DR. FAUSTUS** (1959) Pierre Brasseur, Edith Scob. An all time horror classic! A mad scientist tries to restore his daughters hideous face by using skin from the faces of other young girls. Upgraded from 16mm. 1/30/94 H044





**FRIGHT** (1956 aka **SPELL OF THE HYPNOTIST**) Eric Fleming, Nancy Malone. A weird, hypnotic story about a young woman and a ruthless killer who turn out to be reincarnations of ancient lovers. Intriguing. Upgraded from a nice 16mm original print. 12/30/93 H035

**EYES WITHOUT A FACE** (1959) The longer, subtitled, French language version of the above film. From a stunning 16mm print. 11/1/93 H045

**HORROR HOTEL** (1960) Christopher Lee, Bette St. John. One of the best British horror films ever made. Lee plays a member of a grisly, New England witch's coven that partakes in human sacrifice. A slight upgrade from a gorgeous 16mm print. 1/15/94 H120

**TORMENTED** (1960) Richard Carlson, Julie Redding. Lovable Bert I. Gordon schlock about a pianist who's haunted by the ghostly head of his dead ex-girlfriend. Upgraded from a much brighter 16mm. 10/15/93 H155



**FACE OF THE SCREAMING WEREWOLF** (1958) Lon Chaney, Landa Varle. A Jerry Warren Mexican import. Not much of a movie, really, but Lon has some outstanding scenes as a werewolf including a dynamite transformation scene in front of a lab window. From 35mm. 12/20/93 H123



**CARNIVAL OF SOULS** (1962) Candace Hilligoss, Sidney Berger. One of the finest examples of lowbudget film making at its best. The only survivor of a watery car wreck is haunted by a ghostly personage. A chilling organ music score. From an uncut 16mm print. 1/7/93 H065

**RING OF TERROR** (1962) George Mather, Austin Green. A medical student meets up with horror when he sneaks into a crypt to steal a ring off a corpse's finger. From 16mm. 1/20/94 H068

**SLAUGHTER OF THE VAMPIRES** (1962) Walter Brandt, Dieter Eppler. Bloodsuckers search for new victims while a 'Van Heising' type remains in hot pursuit. Upgraded from 16mm. 11/15/93 H070

**BLOODTHIRST** (1965) Robert Winston, Yvonne Nielson. An obscure monster movie about a strange woman who retains her youth via ritual killings. A cool looking monster is featured. Upgraded from 35mm. 4/1/93 H164

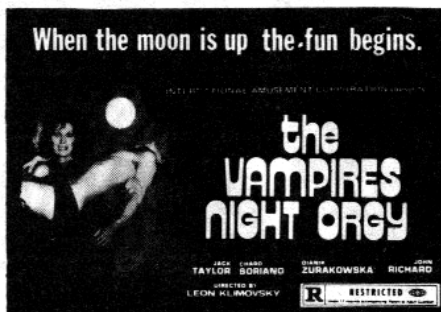
**GHOSTS OF HANLEY HOUSE** (1968) Barbara Chase, Wilkie De Martal. A Texas made b&w thriller about a series of murders committed in a haunted house. A nice upgrade from 16mm. 1/15/94 H091

**FURY OF THE WOLFGIRL** (1970) Paul Naschy, Perla Cristal. Another of Paul's many performances as a werewolf. From a beautiful color 16mm print. 1/20/94 H092

**VENGEANCE OF THE ZOMBIES** (1972) Paul Naschy, Vic Winner. This is one of the more gruesome of Paul's films, featuring all kinds of weird and graphic zombie rites. 1/30/94 H096

**SAGA OF THE DRACULAS** (1972) Tina Sainz, Tony Isbert. The last heir to the Dracula family arrives at the castle of the infamous count. Definitely rated 'R'. Upgraded from a nice 16mm color print. 1/30/94 H097

**CURSE OF THE DEVIL** (1973) Paul Naschy, Faye Falcon. Paul is cursed with lycanthropy by an ancient witch whom his ancestor killed. Letterboxed in scope. From a beautiful 35mm print. 4/1/93 H149



**VAMPIRES NIGHT ORGY** (1973 aka **ORGY OF THE VAMPIRES**) Jack Taylor. A bus load of tourists find themselves in a vampire infested village. Previously edited nudity scenes have been restored. From a 35mm color print. 1/30/94 H119

**IT HAPPENED AT NIGHTMARE INN** (1973 aka **NIGHTMARE HOTEL**) Judy Geeson, Victor Alcazar. This chilling, Spanish horror film has now been upgraded from a nice 16mm original print which contains nearly 7 minutes more footage than our previous video master. 12/21/93 H150

## SWORD AND SANDAL

**GIANTS OF THESSALY** (1960) Roland Carey, Ziva Rodann. Another retelling of the classic story of Jason and the golden fleece. Upgraded from a 16mm color print. 1/10/93 SS01



**SON OF SAMSON** Mark Forest, Chelo Alonso. Samson's son, Maciste, shows up in Egypt where he leads a revolt against an evil queen. Letterboxed in scope. From a stunning, technicolor 16mm print. 9/1/93 SS04

**MOLE MEN AGAINST THE SON OF HERCULES** (1961) Mark Forest. Maciste battles to save his people from a race of weird, underground albino. Upgraded from a color 16mm print. 12/30/93 SS05

**LION OF THEBES** (1964) Mark Forest, Yvonne Furneaux. An exciting adventure epic about the legendary Helen of Troy. A top notch sword and sandal opus with a literate script. Upgraded from 16mm. 12/29/93 SS48

**TOWER OF SCREAMING VIRGINS** (1971) Terry Torday, Jean Plal. A cruel French countess takes many lovers for herself. After she satisfies her lust, she has them disposed of. Rated 'R'. From a spectacular 35mm print. 5/1/93 H137

## JUNGLE THRILLS

**TARZAN'S REVENGE** (1938) Glenn Morris, Eleanor Holme. This Tarzan adventure has been available from many different video companies, but you've probably never seen it in such fine quality. From a gorgeous 16mm original print. 9/25/93 J017

**LAW OF THE JUNGLE** (1942) John King, Arline Judge, Mantan Moreland. A fugitive from justice and an outlaw scientist pursued through the jungle by Nazis. Upgraded from a dynamite 16mm original print. 9/24/93 J020

**SABAKA** (1953 aka **THE HINDU**) Boris Karloff, Victor Jory. A lavish color adventure about a man who becomes involved with a strange cult that worships a weird fire demon. From a technicolor 16mm print. 12/20/93 K013

**TARZAN AND THE TRAPPERS** (1956) Gordon Scott, Lesley Bradley. Tarzan Battles with trapper attempting to loot a fabulous, lost city in the jungle. Upgraded from 16mm. 12/29/93 J032

## MYSTERY-SUSPENSE-FILM NOIR

**UNEASY TERMS** (1948) Michael Rennie, Moira Lister. A superb British mystery about a detective who becomes mixed up in murder and blackmail. A great film. Upgraded from 16mm. 1/5/94 M086

**THE LIMPING MAN** (1953) Lloyd Bridges, Moira Lister. An ex-G.I. finds his sweetheart mixed up with murder and an espionage plot. Upgraded from 16mm. 1/05/94 M103

**POSTMARK FOR DANGER** (1956) Terry Moore, Robert Beatty. Scotland Yard steps in when a journalist in a car crash, but the woman thought to have been with him is found alive. Upgraded from 16mm. 1/5/94 M135

## FORGOTTEN HORRORS

**A SHOT IN THE DARK** (1935) Charles Starrett, Edward Van Sloan. This excellent poverty row mystery features a murderer with a mysterious murder weapon. Upgraded from 16mm. 12/1/93 FH26

**THE DARK HOUR** (1936) Ray Walker, Irene Ware. A murder yarn which finds its characters and suspects all gathered in a big, dark house. From 16mm. 1/10/94 FH30

**THE STAR PACKER** (1934) John Wayne, Verna Hillie. A young girl's father is murdered by a mysterious bandit known as 'The Shadow'. She arrives at his ranch to find it inhabited by ghosts. From 16mm. 12/23/93 FH39

## FANTASY

**BEYOND TOMORROW** (1940) Richard Carlson, Jean Parker. Three spirits decide to return to earth in order to help out a romantic young couple that needs help. Upgraded from 16mm. 12/30/93 F002

**SANTA CLAUS CONQUERS THE MARTIANS** (1964) John Call, Pia Zadora. So bad it's wonderful. Martians kidnap Santa so he can help brighten the lives of deprived Martian children. From a nice color 16mm print. 12/22/93 S084

## JUVENILE SCHLOCK



**THE VIOLENT YEARS** (1956) Jean Moorhead, Barbara Weeks. Ed Wood wrote this hilarious screenplay about a gang of 'bad' girls that hold up gas stations and molest young men. Upgraded from the most beautiful 35mm print you'll ever see. The absolute best on the market. Stunning! 1/11/93 X024

**THE CHOPPERS** (1961) Arch Hall, Jr., Marianne Gaba. Terrific drive-in schlock about a gang of car strippers who try to keep one step ahead of the law. Gaba's a 20 on a scale of 1 to 10. Upgraded from 35mm. 5/1/93 JS11

**NAKED YOUTH** (1961, aka **WILD YOUTH**) Robert Arthur, Robert Hutton, Carol Ohmart. A wild pack of kids unwittingly come into possession of a toy doll filled with high grade heroin. Ohmart is terrific as a female addict. Upgraded from 16mm. 12/30/93 JS19

**WILD ONES ON WHEELS** (1962) Francine York, Robert Blair, Ray Dennis Steckler. A sportscar gang murders an ex-con and forces his wife to locate \$240,000 had had buried in the desert. Upgraded from a beautiful 16mm original print. 8/1/93 JS20



PLEASE NOTE: THIS SALE ABSOLUTELY ENDS AT THE STROKE OF MIDNIGHT, MAY 31, 1994!



# Revisiting NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD With Judith O'Dea

by Perry Shields  
and Kim Reynolds

1993 marked the 25th anniversary of probably the most seminal horror film of the past quarter century – *Night Of The Living Dead*, that black & white classic of flesh-eating zombies that launched the career of director George Romero.

Imitated numerous times, this film remains a classic because of its realistic raw tension and claustrophobia and use of relationships to carry the story, using gore only as an embellishment to the horror rather than the main focus. Judith O'Dea, so memorable as Barbara who witnesses her brother's attack by a zombie in the unforgettable opening scene, was kind enough to speak with us about her memories of the film and how it has affected her life.

**Cult Movies:** Let's back track and start from the beginning and ask you first of all where you're from, a little bit about your background, and how you ended up in Los Angeles?

Judy O'Dea: I am originally from Ohio, born in Youngstown, but ended up in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania for most of my growing up years. When I was in my early twenties, I came out to California to break into the film business. Shortly after the move, I received a call from Carl Hardman (Harry Cooper in *NOLD*). He, Marilyn Eastman (Helen Cooper), and I had gotten to know each other back in Pittsburgh by working on various radio and television commercials, which were recorded at his studio, Hardman Associates. Carl said, "We're going to be making a film, would you like to come back and audition for it?" I thought, how ironic, I came out to California to break into films and I'm going back to my home city to audition for one. That's how I got cast as Barbara in George Romero's *Night Of The Living Dead*.

CM: That brings us to the actual filming of the picture. What time of year was the film shot and how long did it take?

JO: My portion of it was filmed within two to four weeks – July and August – with some cem-

etery pick up shots in October. What a temperature difference!

CM: Have you appeared in any films other than *Night Of The Living Dead*?

JO: No feature films. The closest thing was a 15 to 30 minute industrial film for Calgon Bathoil Beads. The focus of my work is primarily stage with quite a bit of radio, TV, and industrials thrown in.

CM: In the midst of making a movie, you're never objective about its place in the pantheon of films over time. When you making *NOLD*, was there any feeling that this was not going to be another run-of-the-mill exploitation picture? The legend is that it was shot on 16mm because the budget was so low and that it was blown up to 35mm for theatrical release.

JO: In regard to 16mm versus 35mm... we shot with 35mm. I remember because I learned how to load the stock by feel in a cloth bag. All of us took a hand in doing a lot of different things due to our limited budget. As to whether any of us could foresee what the film's impact would be... no. We just knew that we

wanted to make a film we hoped would make enough money to enable us to make better and better films. We wanted to make this as good a film as we could within our budget and experience constraints. Therefore, everyone took what we did seriously. I believe that's one of the important reasons why the film has endured as long as it has.

CM: Do you remember the film's opening and how it was received? Did it open nationally, or did it just open in New York?

JO: It opened at the Fulton Theater in Pittsburgh, and I can remember they had a big full spread Sunday page on it. We had the Klieg lights and the limousines. It was wonderful. We had a ball. After that it wasn't booked into the best of theaters. We played drive-ins and were often the

second on a double bill. But then little by little, articles were written. It continued to make money, and people were surprised. The momentum grew slowly. It was shocker to a lot of people, and there was upset about it. I remember an article, maybe



A still lovely Judith O'Dea poses with one of her favorite magazines (we hope).

from the *Chicago Sun*, that was condensed for *Reader's Digest*. It talked about how children, when they first came into the theaters, sat down with their popcorn and they were running up and down the aisles happily. Then as the film progressed they got quieter and quieter. By the end of the film a lot of them were under the seats really scared and crying.

As a kid I was very frightened by a horror film called *House Of Wax* with Vincent Price. My imagination even to this day goes crazy in the dark. So, it was hard thinking, "Gee, my first film wasn't *The Sound Of Music*, it was *Night Of The Living Dead*, and I scared people." But, over the years, it's incredible to meet people who've seen it and said, "You scared me to death." They have big grins on



their faces, and they thank you for making it, tell you how much they've enjoyed it. That's taken away some of the concern I've had, 'cause people have been so appreciative of it.

CM: There must have been an indication in the script that it was going to be graphic.

JO: I believe so, but I didn't really know just how graphic until I saw the completed film. To this day, I feel that the killing of Helen Cooper by her screen daughter Kyra Schon is still as horrifying as ever. It's an emotional, psychological jerker, that scene. I believe *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* came out around the same time. Those two films really marked a change in the way horror films were made. Thank God for Bosco! It made chomping on all those entrails a heck of a lot easier!

CM: Luckily you didn't have to do any of the chomping.

JO: No, I didn't, and to be honest, I don't know if I could have.

This is just a little side story. Speaking of how frightened you can be, upstairs in the old house is where the actors would get made up. There were several store mannequins for the artists to practice their ghoul make-up on. They used Dermawax, which is what is used by funeral homes to fill holes in bodies. They had one of those set up at a doorway in one of the rooms. I couldn't go by that thing! It frightened me and when I hear myself say it, I think, "Boy, Judith, that sounds pretty silly." But it really did frighten me. I loved doing it but it was realistic to me.

CM: Did you ever see any of the sequels or the remake?

JO: The only one I've seen is *Dawn Of The Dead* — the one that takes place in the Monroeville Mall.

CM: Have you kept in touch with George Romero over the years?

JO: I hadn't until I saw him at the Pittsburgh reunion this past August. It was great to see him again. In our catching up, I mentioned the screenplay I've been writing, thinking how good it would be to corral him into doing it. No luck yet, but who knows!

CM: Please tell us about the reunion.

JO: I knew about it a year ago when Jack Russo, one of the film's producers, and his partner Bob Michelucci called to see if I'd be interested in attending. It was really a big undertaking, one that will remain a standout for me for years to come.

CM: And this was strictly a *NOLD* reunion or was this a horror convention that *NOLD* was a part of?

JO: It was billed as the 25th year anniversary of *Night Of The Living Dead* and there-premiere of the film. But it included all kinds of horror films made over the years. We had such notables as Adam West of *Batman* fame, "Jason" from some of the *Friday The 13th* films, and Gunnar Hansen of the original *Texas Chainsaw Massacre*. There were vendors from all over the country selling everything from video cassettes to original theatrical posters. We even held an auction of *NOLD* memorabilia.

CM: Who else from the *NOLD* cast was at the convention?

JO: Everybody from the original cast was there except Judy Ridley, Tom's girlfriend in the film, and, of course, Duane Jones who passed away several years ago.

The cast all got together for the first time before the reunion, back in December for the Movie Channel, which had a reunion on the air. We were on the *Joe Bob Briggs Drive-In Theater*. What a kick! Marilyn and Carl, Keith, and Tom Savini, who directed the remake, were there. They should have shut down that place, it was so much fun. Poor Joe Bob Briggs really had his hands full, with all of us there and the interplay and the comments going on.

## CAST

BARBARA	Judith O'Dea
JOHNNY	Russell Streiner
BEN	Duane Jones
HARRY	Karl Hardman
TOM	Keith Wayne
JUDY	Judith Ridley
HELEN	Marilyn Eastman
KAREN	Kyra Schon

## CREDITS

PRODUCED BY	Russell Streiner Karl Hardman
DIRECTED BY	George A. Romero
CINEMATOGRAPHER	George A. Romero
SCREENPLAY BY	John A. Russo
PRODUCTION DIRECTOR	Vincent D. Survinski
PRODUCTION MANAGER	George Kosana
LIGHTING SUPERVISOR	Joseph Unitas
SOUND ENGINEER	Gary Streiner
SPECIAL EFFECTS	Regis Survinski Tony Pantanello
SCRIPT COORDINATOR & CONTINUITY	Jacqueline Streiner Betty Ellen Haughey
HAIR STYLES	Bruce Capristo
TITLE SEQUENCE	The Animators

CM: Had you been to any conventions in the '70s or the '80s prior to this?

JO: I did a convention about three years ago for *Fangoria* magazine. A fellow, young man here in town, somehow got in touch and asked if I'd like to be involved and I had never been to a horror convention before. WHOA!! Blew my mind!! I never knew so many people enjoyed these things. They had a question and answer session. People were asking all kinds of questions. After I'd finished there was a little twelve year old girl who had asked me a question, so I said, "Now may I ask you a question?" And she said, "Sure." I said, "Why do you like horror films?" She said, "Well, I like to see how many different ways people get killed." Whoa!! So I just smiled nicely.

CM: Well at least you never killed anybody in the film.

JO: Nope. I didn't get to kill anybody. But I tried. Boy, she rallied at the end, didn't she?

CM: She sure did.

JO: What a difference from the remake.

CM: Are there plans for any future conventions that involve *NOLD*?

JO: I don't know if George, Jack Russo, or Russ Streiner have anything planned specifically. But I do know that they are invited, as well as we all are, to attend various conventions throughout the country. I just got back a short while ago from a Halloween fund-raiser for the March of Dimes in Milwaukee. They had a film festival which included *Night Of The Living Dead*. They also showed the original 1910 Thomas Edison version of *Frankenstein*.

CM: I thought that was lost!

JO: It was! It had been lost for 40 years. Then a fellow in Milwaukee found it, didn't know what he had. He saw the Thomas Edison logo. They showed that, and *Nosferatu* from 1922, which I thoroughly enjoyed.

CM: Please tell us about your acting career now.  
JO: I do at least two Equity Waiver productions a year along with a murder mystery dinner theater production called *Encore*. I love working on the stage. It keeps my skills honed and helps me in my day work at Hughes Aircraft Company. There I am a Presentation Developer/consultant helping employees give more effective oral presentations.

CM: What brought you to Hughes?

JO: My children. I raised them primarily as a single parent. Jenni is now 23 and John is 21. Although I was able to support them for some years working in equity theater, there came a time when I felt it best to put down roots, so that they

could have the stability of going to one school system. We ended up in Long Beach, and I've been commuting to El Segundo ever since.

CM: Do people ask you if you're from the United Kingdom? You have such a cultured speech. Where are your parents from?

JO: Yes, I'm often asked. The way I talk is a result of my English and Irish heritage coupled with a lot of British roles over the years. Dad's side of the family came from Limerick, Ireland. Many of Mom's relatives came from England. So I've sort of combined the best of both worlds — American and English — and have ended up with O'Dea's eclectic speech. I also enjoy tackling other accents as does a favorite actress of mine, Meryl Streep.

CM: Well, that will get you a lot farther. At least it makes you more versatile.

JO: It does if people know it. But, people hear this accent and often times it can work against you because they think, "Oh, that person can't speak any other way." People can funnel you very quickly into neat little slots.

CM: Exactly. Speaking of that, being a fellow employee, the first time I saw Judy O'Dea, Presentations Developer, get on her rather large Honda I thought this does not fit my image of you. How did you come to ride a motorcycle? I only ask that because it's not usual to come out and see somebody like you hop on a motorcycle.

JO: It's a great way to commute on L.A. freeways. I learned when the children were very little and we lived in the desert. I had my own horse, but my husband at that time had rebuilt a Honda 350. We were right out in the sand, but I didn't do much sand riding because I'm not an off-road person, except on a horse. I didn't ride then for years and years. About seven years ago a friend of mine who was on the crew of a show I was in had a motorcycle. I'm not the kind of person who sits in the back, I have to be up front. So, very quickly, I hopped on again and started to ride. Shortly after that I ended up buying a 450 Nighthawk, and from there, within a year, I got a Magna 700. But I think I was always destined for the big Goldwing and ended up with an Aspencade 1200 which I now own. Maybe because I don't have a horse of my own anymore, riding the old iron horse is as close as I'll get here in Los Angeles. But, it's a lot of fun. And you're right, people look at me and say I never thought you'd ride a motorcycle.

CM: Well it's great to break the mold and do the unexpected.

JO: Oh, believe me I've broken a lot of molds in my day.

CM: What about the award you won?

JO: Oh gosh, I've won several awards the past three years. The most recent was the Ethel Award which is the Best Actress award given by the Long Beach Community Players. I was very pleased. And that was for a British show called *Key For Two*.

CM: What sort of films do you like? What's your favorite genre? Do you tend to follow actors or actresses?

JO: I have certain actors and actresses I like and respect, but overall, I follow the storyline first. I love intrigue, psychological thrillers, and good love stories. I also enjoy good comedy, but don't like too much slapstick. The key for me is that the film be well paced and well acted.

CM: Anything that we didn't ask that you think we should have asked today? Any last remarks that you can think of?

JO: I think a great way for me to end is with a quote from Russ Streiner who played my brother Johnny in the movie. When asked, at the reunion, if he or any of us knew *NOLD* was going to be a classic film, he said, "We made the film; you made it a classic," meaning all the wonderful people who have seen and supported it these many years. A big thank you to all of you. ■



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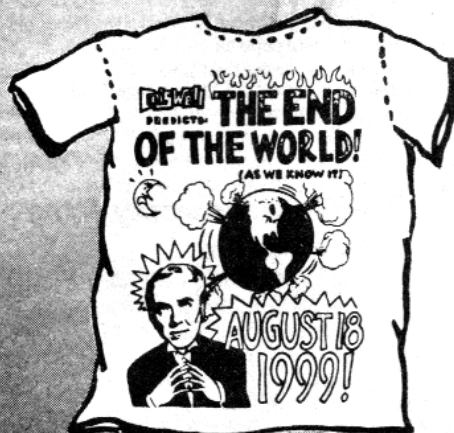
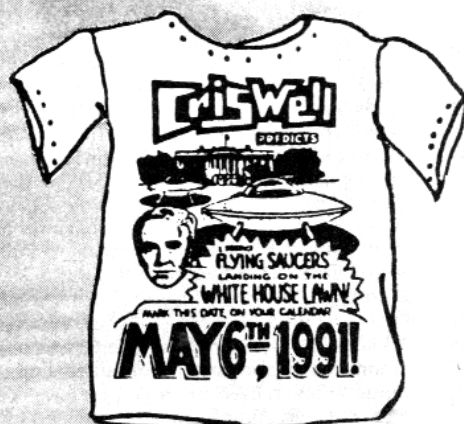
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# Stuff to read

## By Michael Copner

We love to get free goodies in the mail. More and more now, people are sending us books and magazines to review, and it's difficult to get them all reviewed by press time. But here are some of the most ambitious ones.

Since we cover so much giant Japanese monster stuff, it makes sense that publishers of this stuff should contact us. A new book to look for is entitled *Japanese Science Fiction, Fantasy and Horror Films*, written by Stuart Galbraith and published by McFarland & Company. This is 420 pages of listings and reviews, very informative but with no photos. Tons of facts and figures all under one roof, for the price of \$45. It's worth it to the completist or the serious student who wants to know about more than just Godzilla. In book stores, or can be ordered directly from the publisher: McFarland and Company, Box 611, Jefferson, NC 28640.

**Asian Trash Cinema.** We've long sung the praises of this nice little digest magazine, and for a long time they shied away from the giant monster racket. Recently they've had Godzilla on their cover twice, and have featured reviews of the latest Toho Studios releases. Issue 5 features more Godzilla, but mainly sticks to the Chinese action genre. Lots of beautiful babes. A one year subscription (4 issues) is \$20. Send to: Craig Ledbetter, P O Box 5367, Kingwood TX 77325.

**Kaiju Review.** An astounding fanzine, all about Japanese films and television, with special emphasis on Godzilla. Issue number 5 has a sensational menu of articles including video reviews, an appreciation of Raymond Burr, a run down on the new *Godzilla vs. MechaGodzilla*, and a checklist of Gojira related Compact Discs. It's 44 pages of non-stop enlightenment, and lots of photos to look at. Since Markalite has been in hibernation for over two years, this is the proverbial "next best thing." *Kaiju Review* has no slick paper or color printing, but it's overflowing with great content. You can subscribe at ten dollars for four issues. Checks to Dan Reed. A sample copy of the current issue is three dollars. Mail to: *Kaiju Review*, 301 East 64th Street, Suite Five F, New York, NY 10021.

**G-Force: The Newsletter Of The Godzilla Society Of North America.** As soon as you get done ordering your *Kaiju Review*, I want you to send for your subscription to *G-Force*. Every bit as informative as the previous publication, this one is equally fancish in design, and filled to the rafters with great Godzilla things to see and read. If you love Godzilla films there's no better place to go than to these two publications. *G-Force* is published bimonthly by Daikaiju Enterprises, Box 3468, Steinback, Manitoba, Canada, ROA 2A0. Subscription price is \$1.00 per issue. U.S. orders should be paid in U.S. Funds to cover the higher mailing costs.

**Giant Monster Movies, An Illustrated Survey**, researched and written by Robert Marrero. A coffee table book if ever there was one. It's on slick paper with lots of clear, full sized photos (all B&W), and a brief run-down on most everything in this category. It's \$17.95 from Fantasma Books in Florida.

**Yesterday's Tomorrows**, by Bruce Lanier Wright. Features almost 100 gorgeous full-color reproductions of the great Golden Age sci-fi posters, as well as black and white stills and color lobby cards. The book also serves as a nice video guide, since it gives real decent capsule reviews of the films these posters were made to sell. Also mentioned are facts about the illustrator, unique promotional campaigns, details on how the movies were marketed, etc. Has a foreword by Ray Harryhausen. \$19.95 paper/\$29.95 cloth from: Taylor Publishing Company, 1550 West Mockingbird Lane, Dallas, TX 75235.

**Mortar Man.** If you're into superheroes or comic books, you'll love this one! John Marshall, who can be found in this issue of *Cult Movies* with his article on Japanese superheroes, has created a three-part comicbook revolving around a character of his own creation - Mortar Man. He's written the scripts, and the detailed, flashy artwork has been done by the amazing Dan Duncan. This comic has all the flavor of the comics of the 1960s,



and maybe of the Republic Serials we loved so much when superheroes "returned" big time in the '60s. Issues 1, 2, and 3 are still available, send \$1.95 per copy to: Marshall Comics, P O Box 283, Rancocas, NJ 08073.

**Tattoo: The Exotic Art Of Skin Decoration** by Michelle Delio. Sometimes it's hard to be sure why people send us the books they do. *Cult Movies* sure ain't the Tattoo You of the film world. Maybe because it's a cultish thing to do, or because there are lots of tattoo-decorated celebrities in this book, somebody at St. Martin's Press decided to pass this along to us. Actually, it's a helluva good book! Once an art form embraced solely by society's misfits and rebels with (or without) a cause, "getting inked" has now become a common practice among pop culture trendsetters and celebs. It's a new trend in America involving an art form that's thousands of years old. Cher, Lenny Kravitz, Roseanne Arnold, Sean Connery, Drew Barrymore, Ozzy Osbourne and "the Ice Man" have at least their tattoos in common, with this art of body decoration going mainstream! Last week we saw porn star Tom Byron at the laundromat - and even he's getting covered with tattoos. If you're into the scene, this is a book for you. It's slick, glossy, thoroughly illustrated entirely in color, and even gives the reader 7 temporary tattoos you can wear with pride. Price: \$14.95, paperback, from St. Martin's Press.

**3-D Space Zombies**, edited and published by Ray Zone. If you enjoyed those 3-D monsters of the sci-fi films of the '50s, you'll love this book of original monster art. The story and pencils are by Darren Merinuk, ink by Kevin Kalkhoven and lettering was done by Ron Muns. The entire project was supervised by our friend Ray Zone. Ray was a fan of these films when he was a kid, and has set up shop in Hollywood creating some of the wildest, eye-popping 3-D comic art in the country today.

We just learned that Ray may be behind a plan to theatrically re-release one of the best 3-D films on a national run - but that's a story that'll have to wait an issue or two. In the meantime, we highly suggest you pick up *3-D Space Zombies*, which comes complete with a pair of red/blue viewing glasses. \$3.95 from: The 3-D Zone, Box 741159, Los Angeles, CA 90004.

**High Camp: A Gay Guide To Camp And Cult Films** by Paul Roen. Articles and reviews by Roen appeared in the old *Castle Of Frankenstein* magazine. Now he's pulled together a run down on campy, gay and somewhat sexist films ranging from *Myra Breckenridge* to *Hercules Unchained*. There are many curious star facts told along the way, including such celebs as Judy Garland, Steve Reeves, James Dean, Mae West, Tony Curtis, and more. This is a complete guide to camp/cult films of interest to gays from the classic period to the present day. 256 pages, a fair amount of photos. In bookstores, or can be ordered direct from the publisher. Send \$17.95 (paper), or \$27.00 (cloth) to: Leyland Publications, P O Box 410690, San Francisco, CA 94141.

**Gay Film & Video Guide** by Steve Stewart. Includes listings of stars who have played gay characters in films. From mainstream Oscar Winners to indie, foreign and documentary features, each film is listed in an A to Z format. Other sections include the best film quotes from the films, guide to mail-order video sources and film festivals, and four separate indexes pertaining to gay themed films. 290 pages, some illustrations. *Gay Hollywood* can be purchased for \$15.95 in bookstores or directly from the publisher: Companion Publications, P O Box 2575, Laguna Hills, CA 92654 (plus \$2 postage).

**Videoscope.** This 20 page newsletter is published six times a year and provides exhaustive, up to the minute video related news and reviews of new video releases. Almost entirely presented by The Phantom of the Movies, the syndicated video columnist, author of *The Phantom's Ultimate Video Guide* and genre movie critic for the *New York Daily News*. Videoscope is full of interviews, capsule reviews and some neat photos. Six issue subscriptions are \$14.97, to: Phan Media, P O Box 31, Keyport, NJ 07735.

...

## The New Poverty Row

by Fred Olen Ray  
(McFarland, 1991) \$27.95

The longest book McFarland has published on films so far is Dennis Fischer's study of horror film directors in which the author is particularly dismissive of the current crop of low budget filmmakers, among them Fred Olen Ray. Now producer/director/writer Ray has published his own book with the same publisher, and the result avoids the tedium underlying Fischer's more pedantic effort.

In fact, *The New Poverty Row* is as entertaining as one of Ray's better movies; it's fast-paced and full of inside humor. The focus is on creative producers who undertake the adventure of being their own distributors. In contrast to a remainder house full of books detailing the vicissitudes of creative directors suffering under the heavy hand of Philistine producers, Ray tells the story from the other side of the bankbook with the extra attraction that his honor role of economy-driven producers are often the directors of their own projects. One leaves this book wondering if better results are realized when the money man is forced to become his own artists to save a buck...or when the would-



be auteur is forced by a head on collision with the marketplace into becoming practical about the production end!

There are seven primary subjects of Ray's scrutiny: Jerry Warren, Roger Corman, Kane W. Lynn, David L. Hewitt, Sam Sherman, Lawrence H. Woolner and Fred himself. Corman is praised for his ability to combine business acumen, a highly idiosyncratic approach to art (and artifice), and a natural feel for what the public wants to see at any given nanosecond.

The Corman chapter is very important. Ray focuses on the period when Corman first explored the brave new world of independent distribution through Filmgroup, sort of a practice run preceding his ventures with New World and Concorde. Early on, Corman had broader horizons than those encompassed by American International Pictures. Working with AIP or through AIP was a different matter from working for AIP. Despite a few aesthetic misfires from the Filmgroup period (e.g., *Atlas*) and one commercial miscalculation (*The Intruder*), Corman achieved greater freedom for himself as a creator by gaining financial control of his own product...and made some very watchable movies. Filmgroup gave us the cult classic, *The Little Shop Of Horrors* and provided such thoughtful fare as Curtis Harrington's *Night Tide* and Francis Ford Coppola's *Dementia 13*. Ray explains how Corman's failure to secure copyright on what he thought was ephemeral stuff led to rediscovery and even greater exposure for these old films, particularly in the case of *Little Shop* becoming a musical stage hit and then a multi-million dollar movie. There are ironic moments in the world of independent filmmaking.

In the chapter Ray devotes to his own output, there is an almost textbook quality to the manner in which the new AIP (Fred's American Independent Productions, Inc.) has put the best Corman lessons to work. For example, there's the time efficient use of standing sets where two movies are made, back to back. Likewise, time that has been allotted for one movie can more efficiently be used for two. (The story of how *Prison Ship 2000* was made on the heels of *Biohazard* is instructive here.) Another obvious lesson, frequently overlooked by producers at this level, is using a name/star to beef up the appeal of a low budget movie. The publicity advantages are obvious. Or as Fred Ray puts it himself, "We do not always require a big name, just a recognizable name 'right' for the role." Even so, AIP's roster of names already reads like a Who's Who: from Buster Crabbe to Morgan

Fairchild; from John Carradine to John Phillip Law; from Brinke Stevens to Carol Lynley; from Sybil Danning to Russ Tamblyn to David Carradine to Britt Ekland...well, you get the idea. (And AIP is making new stars, too, as witness Michelle Bauer.)

The salient point is that entertainment value is not necessarily sacrificed in low-low budget movies, or even just low budget movies for that matter. Everyone knows about inadvertent pleasures, as celebrated so conspicuously in the Medved/Golden Turkey school of film criticism; but sometimes rare gems may be found in the territory explored by *The New Poverty Row*.

*Spider Baby* is one such delight, providing Fred Olen Ray another opportunity of demonstrating his theses about the freedom to be had from independent distribution. Here is a brilliantly demented film, a satire shot in black and white by writer-director Jack Hill in the early sixties, and featuring the last really memorable performance by Lon Chaney, Jr. (and a great bit from Mantan Moreland, too). Unpaid bills had left this little epic about genetic decay, incest and cannibalism in a film lab until 1965 when David L. Hewitt's American General Pictures picked it up and double-billed it with one of its color productions.

In contrast, AGP made some pretty sorry pictures on its own. Of a miserable attempt to do a *King Kong* type movie, and ultimately provide Elvira with funnier than usual grist for her mill, Ray observes that "...Hewitt made *The Mighty Gorga*, a giant gorilla-lost-world epic of incredibly timid proportions." And yet without this same AGP, a movie like *Spider Baby* would never have seen the light of day...and we would have missed more proof that Lon Chaney, Jr. was a much better actor than the critics were usually willing to admit.

It must be admitted, however, that the independent distributor must ultimately turn to production. There are only so many lost movies lying around, waiting to be found. In this arena, where every decision must be right the first time (and how these guys avoid nervous breakdowns is a wonder), there is a wide disparity in quality. Perhaps the worst of the lot under review is Jerry Warren, but even he had inspiration regarding the one area where everyone discussed in this book excels: *the art of promotion!* An in addition to throwing together some very nice posters, he did put John Carradine before the camera a lot. Plus: you can't fault his honesty, to wit: "I did only enough to get by." Appropriately, his most famous title probably sums up the experience of watching any

of his films: *The Incredible Petrified World*. The text is very funny in this section.

Fred Olen Ray is always willing to give an E for effort, and Sam Sherman loves movies so much that he even made one that is fascinating to watch despite some deficiencies: *Satan's Sadists*. Perhaps more famous is *Dracula vs. Frankenstein*, thrown together in the hodgepodge production style that seems to be Sherman's chosen métier. (And we get to see Forry Ackerman in one of his meatier screen appearances.) some of the best writing in *The New Poverty Row* is on display here, as if Fred Ray is caught up in admiration of the persistence of Sherman, a man who could retile, recut, re-poster (if that's a word), and just plain redo the same movie over and over and over without any appreciable increase in quality. To quote Fred on the subject of director Al Adamson's *Blood Of Ghastly Horror*, formally *Psycho A Go-Go* over at Kane Lynn's Hemisphere Pictures before becoming *Fiend With The Electronic Brain* over at David L. Hewitt's American General before finally finding its tortured way, orphan child of bad movies, to Sherman's Independent-International (!!!)...well, as I say, to quote the author of this amazing book: "It is mind-boggling entertainment, but for one viewing, fun, if only for the tenacity of Adamson, which is astounding." No movie thrown together from bits and scraps, and constantly redone, could find a better producer-distributor than Sam Sherman.

Finally, this is a fun book. It beats the hell out of the tortured academic tomes that can only rehash the same material without adding any entertaining cheap sensationalism, the way these movies do. Author Ray pays attention to the little details that win a film buff's heart (such as complaining about how the stupid zoom shots in Hemisphere Pictures' first two *Blood Island* movies give the viewer a headache). Fred points out that all of these producer-distributors know what the audience wants, even if some don't do a very good job of providing it.

If there is any fault in the book, aside from one glitch confusing *Somewhere In Time* with *Time After Time*, it is that Fred Olen Ray doesn't spend more time on his own company. With the passage of time, his movies are delivering more and more of what the posters promise. And with titles such as *Hollywood Chainsaw Hookers* and *Beverly Hills Vamp*, that's no small feat.

— Reviewed by Brad Linaweaver  
(Brad Linaweaver is an award winning author and reviewer.) ■





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**PSYCHO:** For a book I am co-writing with Janet Leigh (to be published by Harmony Books/Random House), on the making of *Psycho* and its enduring impact, I am interested in hearing interesting or unusual stories from those who saw the film upon its initial release in 1960. I am also interested in acquiring *Psycho*-related memorabilia. Christopher Nickens, 1433 No. Orange Grove Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90046.

**WANTED:** English translations (accurate) of the original shooting scripts for: *Gojira* (1954), *Gojira No Gyakusho* (1955), *Rodan* (1957), *Monster Varan* (1958), *Gojira '84* (Not English language version called *Godzilla '85*), and new *Gojira vs. MechaGojira* (1993). Also production info (in English), posters and English subtitled Hong Kong laser to *Gojira vs. Mothra* (1992). Richard Ekstedt, 62 David Ct., Dayton, NJ 08810.

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# Obituaries

## Carroll Borland

Carroll Borland, who created the role of "Luna," the Vampire Woman in the 1935 MGM horror classic *Mark Of The Vampire*, died February 3 in Arlington, Virginia of pneumonia. She was 79.

With her pale beauty, long, dark hair parted in the middle, and Shakespearean training, Ms. Borland made an indelible impression as Luna, joining Bela Lugosi as they haunted the Gothic MGM sets of this Tod Browning-directed melodrama.

Born in Fresno, California, in 1914, she practiced ballet at the age of 4, and acted in high school such Shakespearean roles as Juliet, Cleopatra and Lady Macbeth. Attending a matinee of the play *Dracula*, she began her friendship with Bela Lugosi, who inspired her to write a sequel to *Dracula*, a novel entitled *Countess Dracula*, which will be published this year by Magiclemage.

Ms. Borland won a California state-wide Shakespeare scholarship in 1931, attending University of California at Berkeley. In 1932, she toured as Lucy with Lugosi in a stage revival of *Dracula*. She became a staff actress for CBS radio and, in 1935, won the role of Luna in *Mark Of The Vampire*. MGM publicized that the studio had selected Ms. Borland for the vampire role from 32 pounds of photographs from actresses aspiring to play the vampire woman.

She later acted for Universal in *Sutter's Gold* and the original *Flash Gordon* serial, and acted on the Los Angeles stage in such plays as *Everyman*, *The Drunkard*, and *The Women*.

In 1937, Ms. Borland married Vernon J. Parten, a newspaperman and publicist for such stars as Marlene Dietrich and John Wayne. Together they wrote scripts for the radio soap opera, *John's Other Wife*.

After her acting career, Ms. Borland earned a Doctorate in Education, and later taught at numerous institutions, including the UCLA Extension Division and Pacific Oaks College.



Borland in 1934 (above) and from *Mark Of The Vampire* (1935).

"The best thing I teach my students," she said, "is to understand and appreciate the past, but always to look forward, at any age, to the experiences and knowledge that lie ahead."

Carroll Borland is survived by her husband; her daughter, Anne Parten of Alexandria, VA; a son-in-law, Philip Nelson; and two grandchildren, Thomas and Robert.

By Greg Mank



## Claude Akins

He was a man with a terrific sense of humor, a heart of gold, and more talent than any of today's five actors combined. A character actor is supposed to support the main actor, but this guy was so great and had such a presence, he often dominated the screen. He was a Mike Mazurki-type in that he played mostly heavies/thugs; he had the face everybody recognized but they just didn't know his name.

Claude Akins starred in one of the most popular of Twilight Zone episodes, *The Monsters Are Due On Maple Street* and years later starred in his own show, *The Misadventures Of Sheriff Lobo*. Claude played characters of many variations, including an Irish immigrant nemesis - *Big Valley*; a corrupting, knaving foreman - *Bonanza*; and a cannibal chief - *I Love Lucy*.

Claude was a professional and he knew his business well, and without his appearances, many films might not have been as effective. A few examples: *From Here To Eternity*, *Onionhead*, *The Caine Mutiny*, *The Devil's Brigade*, *The Defiant Ones*, and *Inherit The Wind*. If you like the bad guys, enjoy him as John Wayne's adversary in *Rio Bravo* and as General Aldo, the kill-happy gorilla in *Battle For The Planet Of The Apes*.

Akins died in his Altadena home on January 27, 1994. Goodbye, Claude. You were fantastic!

by Ed G. Lousarian

## Bill Bixby

Mr. Bixby almost single-handedly made three television shows successful (*The Incredible Hulk*, *The Courtship of Eddie's Father*, and most importantly, *My Favorite Martian*). Bixby co-starred with Elvis Presley in *Speedway* and in *Clambake*, and later hooked up with Don Knotts and Tim Conway in Disney's *The Apple Dumpling Gang*. He also starred in the shortlived television series *The Magician*.

Bill Bixby passed away on November 21, 1993. Thanks for the quality entertainment, Mr. Bixby. We'll miss you.

by Ed G. Lousarian

## Cesar Romero



Has there ever been a kinder gentleman and a more versatile actor than Cesar Romero? Possibly, but in Frank Sinatra's words, "too few to mention."

(continued)



Born in New York City, February 1907, he appeared in over 100 films including *Vera Cruz* with Burt Lancaster, *Ocean's 11* with the Rat Pack, *Donovan's Reef* where he mentally victimizes John Wayne, Toho's sci-fi epic *Latitude Zero*, and what many consider to be the best Charlie Chan picture ever, *Charlie Chan At Treasure Island*.

Mr. Romero once told me that working on *Bonanza* was one of his most enjoyable experiences, and although it was only a one-hour TV episode, it was one of his finest performances, as he portrayed an aging circus man who goes ga-ga over a soon-to-be-married damsel thirty years his junior. See Cesar lose his marbles and frame Michael Landon for murder he himself commits.

Romero is best known for his work as the loony "Joker" in TV's *Batman* who always gave the Dynamic Duo their money's worth, and with a kooky laugh that made Boy Wonder's skin under leotards crawl - Holy epidermis!

Our beloved actor passed away unexpectedly on New Year's Day. Avo Possigian (The Comic of Insane Proportions) said of him, "Cesar Romero was not just an inspiration to actors, but to human beings in general. He had a knack to act with class and character, and at the same time, made people feel at ease and warm inside." Well, he sure did. Do check him out in *The Spectre Of Edgar Allan Poe*. His basement of horrors is enchanting, as is his performance.

by Ed G. Lousarian

## Telly Savalas

Who would ever think that a lolly-pop sucking, New York accented, balder than an egg Greek named Telly Aristoteles Savalas would make it big in the entertainment industry? Well, why not? This guy was so charismatic and so charming and so outstanding at what he did, that he was an absolute original! He's the one who made lolly-pops so popular in the '70s, and who made baldness a not-so-terrible thing. It was Mr. Savalas who coined the phrase, "Who loves ya, baby?" which will never be forgotten!



Savalas in *Horror Express* (1973).

Telly, who served with AUS in World War II and who earned his well-deserved Emmy in 1974 was a fun-loving guy, a lover of women, and a man after my own heart. He was so versatile as an actor, that we can contrast his good guy/good cop image from *Kojak* with his many roles of peculiar and insane persons, ranging from a mental moron in dire need of medication on *Bonanza* to the psychotic Pontius Pilate in *The Greatest Story Ever Told* to the religious fanatic in *The Dirty Dozen* to the violent hater of Burt Lancaster in *The Scalp Hunters*.

Telly Savalas didn't seem to ever age until a few short months prior to his death by cancer at age 72 in late January. He left behind six children and a legacy of greatness. Other of films include *Battle Of The Bulge* and *Kelly's Heroes* with a fellow bald-boy, Don Rickles and studmeister, Clint Eastwood. For all you cult creeps, don't miss the Telster in *Horror Express*, where he stars with Christopher Lee and Peter Cushing as an unscrupulous cop (even Kojak would be ashamed of him!), and by all means please catch him in "Living Doll", one of the best episodes of *Twilight Zone*, where he is antagonized by a child's doll called Talking Tina, who talks trash to Telly. It's wonderful to see Telly using assorted methods such as electric sawing, et al to destroy this rubbermade toddler. Never before has anyone been so ticked-off at a stupid toy. Telly should have picked up an Emmy for this one! Take it easy, Telly, and say "Hi" to Stavros!

by Ed G. Lousarian

## Myrna Loy



Loy in *13 Women* (1932).

On December 14, 1993 a true Hollywood legend died at the age of 88, Miss Myrna Loy. She will always be best remembered as "the perfect wife," a title she earned from the roles she played in such films as *The Thin Man* series with William Powell, *Wife vs Secretary* with Clark Gable and *The Best Years Of Our Lives*, but before all this she was playing roles of a more sinister nature. She was a siren, a sex-goddess, a vamp with a wickedly evil streak as in *The Mask Of Fu Manchu* with Boris Karloff, *Thirteen Women* and *Renegades* with Bela Lugosi.

Sexy, cold blooded, ruthless and cruel, always trying to take advantage of any given situation for her own selfish purposes and pleasures. She would kill a man as soon as look at him or treat him like dirt and have him beg for more.

Cult Movies fans should check her out as "Fah Lo See," Fu Manchu's evil, nymphomaniacal daughter in *The Mask Of Fu Manchu*. She's at her sadistic best in this one!

## Other recent deaths include:

Joseph Cotten, best remembered for *Citizen Kane* and *The Third Man*, also appeared in *The Abominable Dr. Phibes* with Vincent Price.



Joseph Cotten in *Citizen Kane* (1941).

Gordon Douglas, director of *Them* and *Zombies On Broadway* with Bela Lugosi.

Frances Gifford, the original Nyoka in the Republic serial *Jungle Girl* and *Tarzan Triumphs*.

Leon Ames, starred with Bela Lugosi in *Murders In The Rue Morgue* under the name Leon Waycoff.

Charles Lamont, director of *Three Stooges* and *Abbott and Costello* movies.

Jeff Morrow, starred in *This Island Earth* with Faith Domergue, *The Giant Claw*, *The Creature Walks Among Us*, and *Kronos*.

Martin Kosleck, played a lot of Nazis and was featured in *The Mummy's Curse* with Lon Chaney and *House Of Horrors* with Rondo Hatton.

Farewell to all.



Frances Gifford in *Jungle Girl* (1941).



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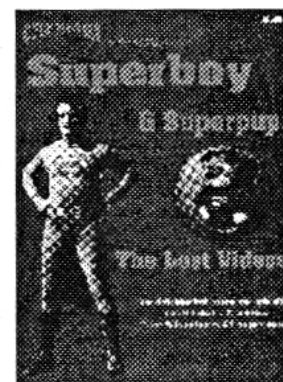
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